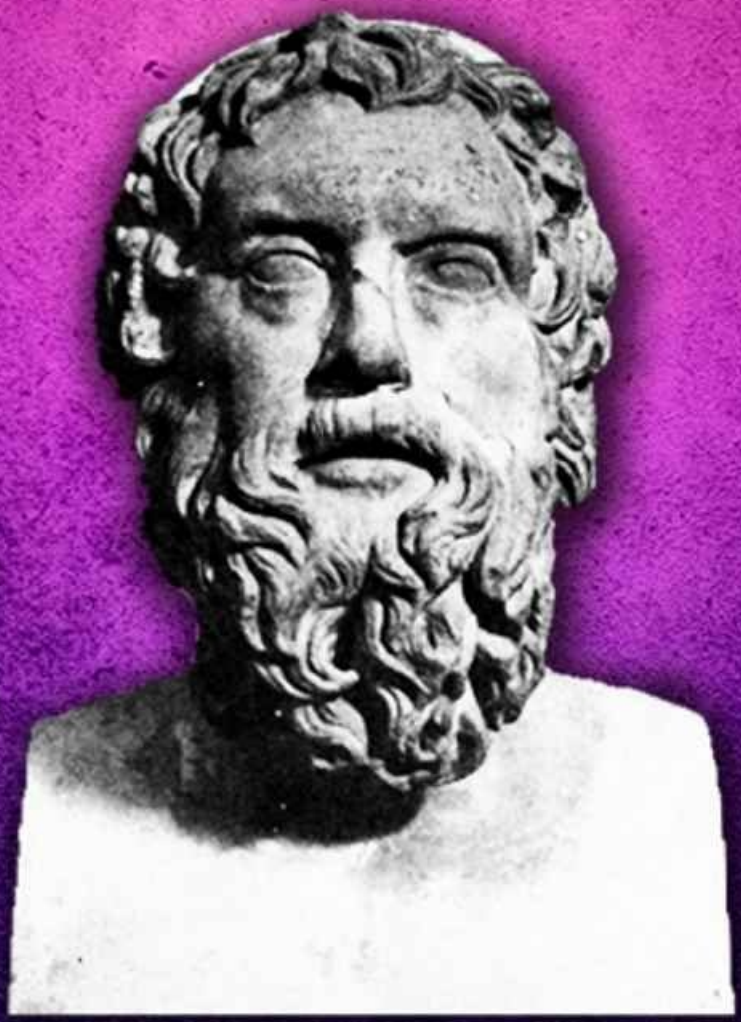
The Complete Works of
ARISTOPHANES



DELPHI CLASSICS

The Complete Works of

ARISTOPHANES

(c. 446 BC–386 BC)

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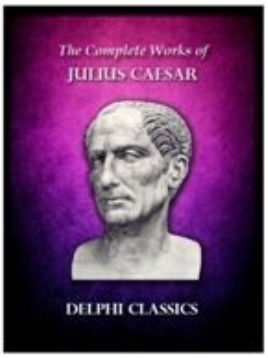

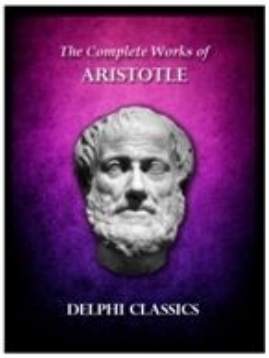

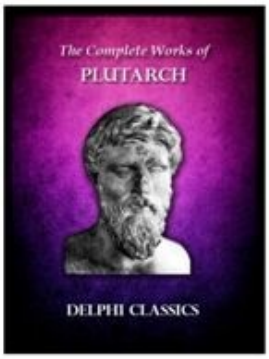

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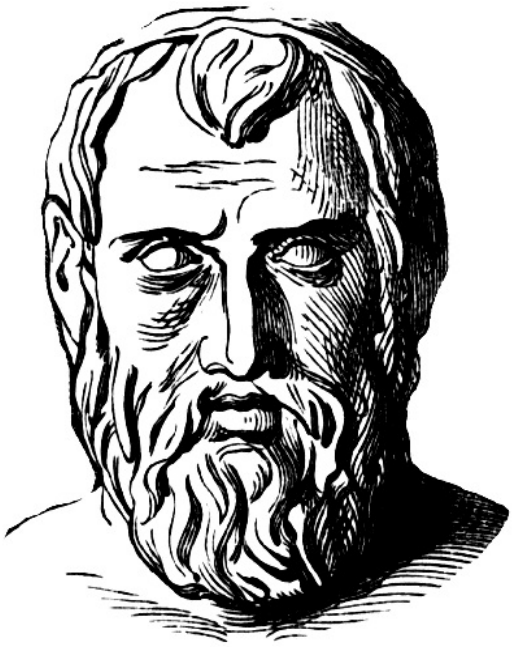


By Delphi Classics, 2013

The Translations

Aristophanes' birthplace — Athens

THE ACHARNIANS

Anonymous translation for the Athenian Society, London, 1912

This is the earliest of Aristophanes' eleven extant plays, which was produced in 425 BC, winning first place at the Lenaia festival. One of the lesser festivals of Athens, the Lenaia dramatic competition, which was held in honour of Dionysus, took place in Athens in the month of Gamelion, approximately corresponding to January. The play is notable for its yearning demands for an end to the Peloponnesian War and for Aristophanes' spirited response to the attacks he suffered for his previous play, now lost, *The Babylonians*. The demagogue politician Cleon had reviled the last play as a slander against the Athenian polis and so Aristophanes used *The Acharnians* to refute Cleon's accusations and to withstand political intimidation.

The Peloponnesian War was already into its sixth year when *The Acharnians* was produced. The Spartans and their allies had been invading Attica each year, burning and looting farm property in order to provoke the Athenians into a land battle that they could not win. The Athenians always remained behind their city walls until the enemy returned home, whereupon they would march out to wreak revenge on their pro-Spartan neighbours, Megara in particular. The war had already resulted in daily privations for Athens, with starvation and plague, and yet democratic Athens continued to be guided by the pro-war faction led by politicians like Cleon. Aristophanes' earlier play, *The Babylonians*, had depicted the cities of the Athenian League as slaves grinding at a mill and it had been performed at the City Dionysia in the presence of foreigners. Cleon had subsequently prosecuted the playwright for slandering the polis. Aristophanes was already planning his revenge when *The Acharnians* was produced and it includes veiled references that he would have much greater revenge on the politician in his next play, *The Knights*. *The Acharnians* captures the genuine hunger for peace felt by the Athenians at a time when the city was suffering from hardships of an unrelenting war with no end within sight.

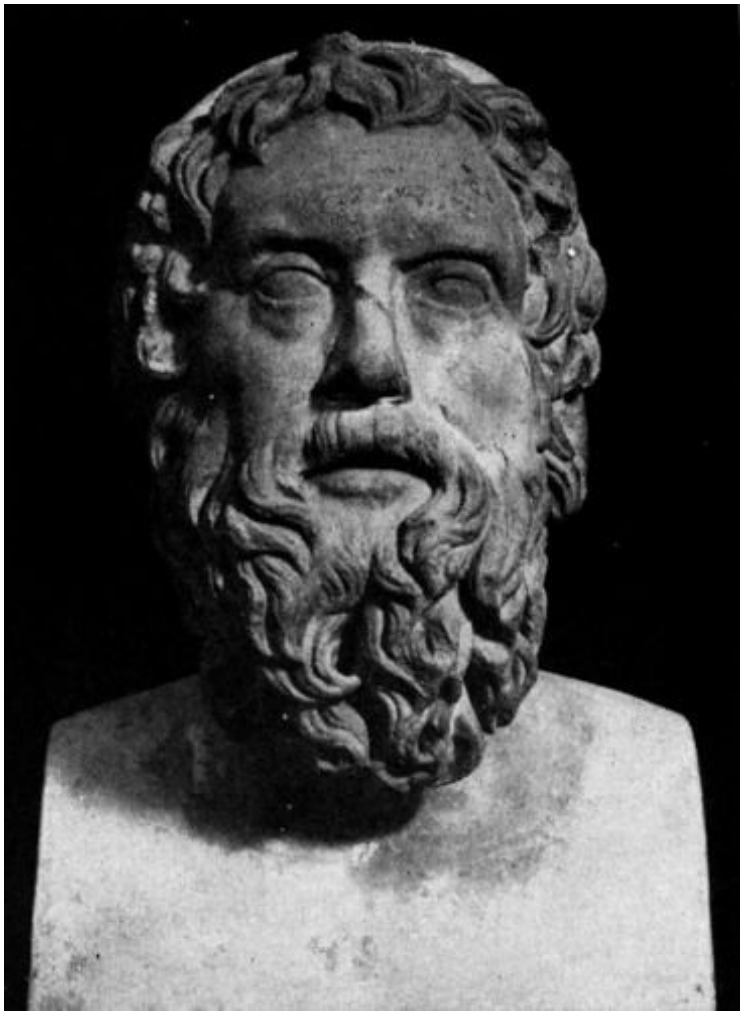
The play concerns the middle-aged Athenian Assembly man Dikaiopolis, who is tired of the war and miraculously obtains a private peace treaty with The Spartans, allowing him to enjoy the benefits of peace, in spite of opposition and envy from his fellow Athenians. Among his opponents are the play's chorus, a mob of aged farmers and charcoal burners from Acharnae, who are tough

veterans of past wars and have grown to hate the Spartans for destroying their farms and so despise anyone who talks peace.

The Structure of Old Comedy The structural elements of a typical Aristophanic comedy can be summarised as follows:

- prologue - an introductory scene with a dialogue and/or soliloquy addressed to the audience, expressed in iambic trimeter and explaining the situation that is to be resolved in the play;
- *parodos* - the arrival of the chorus, dancing and singing, sometimes followed by a choreographed skirmish with one or more actors, often expressed in long lines of tetrameters;
- *symmetrical scenes* - passages featuring songs and declaimed verses in long lines of tetrameters, arranged symmetrically in two sections such that each half resembles the other in meter and line length; the agon and parabasis can be considered specific instances of symmetrical scenes:
- *parabasis* - verses through which the Chorus addresses the audience directly, firstly in the middle of the play and again near the end (see the section below Parabasis);
- *agon* - a formal debate that decides the outcome of the play, typically in anapestic tetrameter, though iambs are sometimes used to delineate inferior arguments;
- *episodes* - sections of dialogue in iambic trimeter, often in a succession of scenes featuring minor characters towards the end of a play;
- *songs* ('strophes'/'antistrophes' or 'odes'/'antodes') - often in symmetrical pairs where each half has the same meter and number of lines as the other, used as transitions between other structural elements, or between scenes while actors change costume, and often commenting on the action;
- *exodus* - the departure of the Chorus and the actors, in song and dance celebrating the hero's victory and sometimes celebrating a symbolic marriage.

The rules of the competition did not prevent a playwright arranging and adjusting these elements to suit his own wishes. For example, in *The Acharnians* there is no formal *agon* whereas in *The Clouds* there are two *agons*.



An ancient bust of the playwright

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The Pnyx is a hill in central Athens, where the Athenians gathered to host their popular assemblies, thus making the hill one of the earliest and most important sites in the creation of democracy. 'The Acharnians' opens at this location.

INTRODUCTION

This is the first of the series of three Comedies— 'The Acharnians,' 'Peace' and 'Lysistrata' — produced at intervals of years, the sixth, tenth and twenty-first of the Peloponnesian War, and impressing on the Athenian people the miseries and disasters due to it and to the scoundrels who by their selfish and reckless policy had provoked it, the consequent ruin of industry and, above all, agriculture, and the urgency of asking Peace. In date it is the earliest play brought out by the author in his own name and his first work of serious importance. It was acted at the Lenaean Festival, in January, 426 B.C., and gained the first prize, Cratinus being second.

Its diatribes against the War and fierce criticism of the general policy of the War party so enraged Cleon that, as already mentioned, he endeavoured to ruin the author, who in 'The Knights' retorted by a direct and savage personal attack on the leader of the democracy. The plot is of the simplest. Dicaeopolis, an Athenian citizen, but a native of Acharnae, one of the agricultural *demes* and one which had especially suffered in the Lacedaemonian invasions, sick and tired of the ill-success and miseries of the War, makes up his mind, if he fails to induce the people to adopt his policy of "peace at any price," to conclude a private and particular peace of his own to cover himself, his family, and his estate. The Athenians, momentarily elated by victory and over-persuaded by the demagogues of the day — Cleon and his henchmen, refuse to hear of such a thing as coming to terms. Accordingly Dicaeopolis dispatches an envoy to Sparta on his own account, who comes back presently with a selection of specimen treaties in his pocket. The old man tastes and tries, special terms are arranged, and the play concludes with a riotous and uproarious rustic feast in honour of the blessings of Peace and Plenty. Incidentally excellent fun is poked at Euripides and his dramatic methods, which supply matter for so much witty badinage in several others of our author's pieces.

Other specially comic incidents are: the scene where the two young daughters of the famished Megarian are sold in the market at Athens as sucking-pigs — a scene in which the convenient similarity of the Greek words signifying a pig and the 'pudendum muliebre' respectively is utilized in a whole string of ingenious and suggestive 'double entendres' and ludicrous jokes; another where the Informer, or Market-Spy, is packed up in a crate as crockery and carried off home by the Boeotian buyer.

The drama takes its title from the Chorus, composed of old men of Acharnae.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DICAEOPOLIS.
HERALD.
AMPHITHEUS.
AMBASSADORS.
PSEUDARTABAS.
THEORUS.
WIFE OF DICAEOPOLIS.
DAUGHTER OF DICAEOPOLIS.
EURIPIDES.
CEPHISOPHON, servant of Euripides.
LAMACHUS.
ATTENDANT OF LAMACHUS.
A MEGARIAN.
MAIDENS, daughters of the Megarian.
A BOEOTIAN.
NICARCHUS.
A HUSBANDMAN.
A BRIDESMAID.
AN INFORMER.
MESSENGERS.
CHORUS OF ACHARNIAN ELDERS.

SCENE: The Athenian Ecclesia on the Pnyx; afterwards Dicaeopolis' house in the country.

THE ACHARNIANS

DICAEOPOLIS *(alone)*. What cares have not gnawed at my heart and how few have been the pleasures in my life! Four, to be exact, while my troubles have been as countless as the grains of sand on the shore! Let me see of what value to me have been these few pleasures? Ah! I remember that I was delighted in soul when Cleon had to disgorge those five talents; I was in ecstasy and I love the Knights for this deed; 'it is an honour to Greece.' But the day when I was impatiently awaiting a piece by Aeschylus, what tragic despair it caused me when the herald called, "Theognis, introduce your Chorus!" Just imagine how this blow struck straight at my heart! On the other hand, what joy Dexitheus caused me at the musical competition, when he played a Boeotian melody on the lyre! But this year by contrast! Oh! what deadly torture to hear Chaeris perform the prelude in the Orthian mode! — Never, however, since I began to bathe, has the dust hurt my eyes as it does to-day. Still it is the day of assembly; all should be here at daybreak, and yet the Pnyx is still deserted. They are gossiping in the market-place, slipping hither and thither to avoid the vermilioned rope. The Prytanes even do not come; they will be late, but when they come they will push and fight each other for a seat in the front row. They will never trouble themselves with the question of peace. Oh! Athens! Athens! As for myself, I do not fail to come here before all the rest, and now, finding myself alone, I groan, yawn, stretch, break wind, and know not what to do; I make sketches in the dust, pull out my loose hairs, muse, think of my fields, long for peace, curse town life and regret my dear country home, which never told me to 'buy fuel, vinegar or oil'; there the word 'buy,' which cuts me in two, was unknown; I harvested everything at will. Therefore I have come to the assembly fully prepared to bawl, interrupt and abuse the speakers, if they talk of aught but peace. But here come the Prytanes, and high time too, for it is midday! As I foretold, hah! is it not so? They are pushing and fighting for the front seats.

HERALD. Move on up, move on, move on, to get within the consecrated area.

AMPHITHEUS. Has anyone spoken yet?

HERALD. Who asks to speak?

AMPHITHEUS. I do.

HERALD. Your name?

AMPHITHEUS. Amphitheus.

HERALD. You are no man.

AMPHITHEUS. No! I am an immortal! Amphitheus was the son of Ceres and Triptolemus; of him was born Celeus. Celeus wedded Phaencreté, my grandmother, whose son was Lucinus, and, being born of him, I am an immortal; it is to me alone that the gods have entrusted the duty of treating with the Lacedaemonians. But, citizens, though I am immortal, I am dying of hunger; the Prytanes give me naught.

A PRYTANIS. Guards!

AMPHITHEUS. Oh, Triptolemus and Ceres, do ye thus forsake your own blood?

DICAEOPOLIS. Prytanes, in expelling this citizen, you are offering an outrage to the Assembly. He only desired to secure peace for us and to sheathe the sword.

PRYTANIS. Sit down and keep silence!

DICAEOPOLIS. No, by Apollo, will I not, unless you are going to discuss the question of peace.

HERALD. The ambassadors, who are returned from the Court of the King!

DICAEOPOLIS. Of what King? I am sick of all those fine birds, the peacock ambassadors and their swagger.

HERALD. Silence!

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh! oh! by Ecbatana, what assumption!

AN AMBASSADOR. During the archonship of Euthymenes, you sent us to the Great King on a salary of two drachmae per diem.

DICAEOPOLIS. Ah! those poor drachmae!

AMBASSADOR. We suffered horribly on the plains of the Caÿster, sleeping under a tent, stretched deliciously on fine chariots, half dead with weariness.

DICAEOPOLIS. And I was very much at ease, lying on the straw along the battlements!

AMBASSADOR. Everywhere we were well received and forced to drink delicious wine out of golden or crystal flagons….

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh, city of Cranaus, thy ambassadors are laughing at thee!

AMBASSADOR. For great feeders and heavy drinkers are alone esteemed as men by the barbarians.

DICAEOPOLIS. Just as here in Athens, we only esteem the most drunken debauchees.

AMBASSADOR. At the end of the fourth year we reached the King's Court, but he had left with his whole army to ease himself, and for the space of eight months he was thus easing himself in midst of the golden mountains.

DICAEOPOLIS. And how long was he replacing his dress?

AMBASSADOR. The whole period of a full moon; after which he returned to his palace; then he entertained us and had us served with oxen roasted whole in an oven.

DICAEOPOLIS. Who ever saw an oxen baked in an oven? What a lie!

AMBASSADOR. On my honour, he also had us served with a bird three times as large as Cleonymus, and called the Boaster.

DICAEOPOLIS. And do we give you two drachmae, that you should treat us to all this humbug?

AMBASSADOR. We are bringing to you, Pseudartabas, the King's Eye.

DICAEOPOLIS. I would a crow might pluck out thine with his beak, thou cursed ambassador!

HERALD. The King's Eye!

DICAEOPOLIS. Eh! Great gods! Friend, with thy great eye, round like the hole through which the oarsman passes his sweep, you have the air of a galley doubling a cape to gain the port.

AMBASSADOR. Come, Pseudartabas, give forth the message for the Athenians with which you were charged by the Great King.

PSEUDARTABAS. Jartaman exarx 'anapissonnai satra.

AMBASSADOR. Do you understand what he says?

DICAEOPOLIS. By Apollo, not I!

AMBASSADOR. He says, that the Great King will send you gold. Come, utter the word 'gold' louder and more distinctly.

DICAEOPOLIS. Thou shalt not have gold, thou gaping-arsed Ionian.

DICAEOPOLIS. Ah! may the gods forgive me, but that is clear enough.

AMBASSADOR. What does he say?

DICAEOPOLIS. That the Ionians are debauchees and idiots, if they expect to receive gold from the barbarians.

AMBASSADOR. Not so, he speaks of medimni of gold.

DICAEOPOLIS. What medimni? Thou art but a great braggart; but get your way, I will find out the truth by myself. Come now, answer me clearly, if you do not wish me to dye your skin red. Will the Great King send us gold? *(Pseudartabas makes a negative sign.)* Then our ambassadors are seeking to deceive us? *(Pseudartabas signs affirmatively.)* These fellows make signs like any Greek; I am sure that they are nothing but Athenians. Oh, ho! I recognize one of these eunuchs; it is Clisthenes, the son of Sibyrtius. Behold the effrontery of this shaven rump! How! great baboon, with such a beard do you seek to play the eunuch to us? And this other one? Is it not Straton?

HERALD. Silence! Let all be seated. The Senate invites the King's Eye to the

Prytaneum.

DICAEOPOLIS. Is this not sufficient to drive one to hang oneself? Here I stand chilled to the bone, whilst the doors of the Prytaneum fly wide open to lodge such rascals. But I will do something great and bold. Where is Amphitheus? Come and speak with me.

AMPHITHEUS. Here I am.

DICAEOPOLIS. Take these eight drachmae and go and conclude a truce with the Lacedaemonians for me, my wife and my children; I leave you free, my dear citizens, to send out embassies and to stand gaping in the air.

HERALD. Bring in Theorus, who has returned from the Court of Sitalces.

THEORUS. I am here.

DICAEOPOLIS. Another humbug!

THEORUS. We should not have remained long in Thrace….

DICAEOPOLIS. Forsooth, no, if you had not been well paid.

THEORUS. … If the country had not been covered with snow; the rivers were ice-bound at the time that Theognis brought out his tragedy here; during the whole of that time I was holding my own with Sitalces, cup in hand; and, in truth, he adored you to such a degree, that he wrote on the walls, "How beautiful are the Athenians!" His son, to whom we gave the freedom of the city, burned with desire to come here and eat chitterlings at the feast of the Apaturia; he prayed his father to come to the aid of his new country and Sitalces swore on his goblet that he would succour us with such a host that the Athenians would exclaim, "What a cloud of grasshoppers!"

DICAEOPOLIS. May I die if I believe a word of what you tell us! Excepting the grasshoppers, there is not a grain of truth in it all!

THEORUS. And he has sent you the most warlike soldiers of all Thrace.

DICAEOPOLIS. Now we shall begin to see clearly.

HERALD. Come hither, Thracians, whom Theorus brought.

DICAEOPOLIS. What plague have we here?

THEORUS. 'Tis the host of the Odomanti.

DICAEOPOLIS. Of the Odomanti? Tell me what it means. Who has mutilated their tools like this?

THEORUS. If they are given a wage of two drachmae, they will put all Boeotia to fire and sword.

DICAEOPOLIS. Two drachmae to those circumcised hounds! Groan aloud, ye people of rowers, bulwark of Athens! Ah! great gods! I am undone; these Odomanti are robbing me of my garlic! Will you give me back my garlic?

THEORUS. Oh! wretched man! do not go near them; they have eaten garlic.

DICAEOPOLIS. Prytanes, will you let me be treated in this manner, in my own country and by barbarians? But I oppose the discussion of paying a wage to the Thracians; I announce an omen; I have just felt a drop of rain.

HERALD. Let the Thracians withdraw and return the day after to-morrow; the Prytanes declare the sitting at an end.

DICAEOPOLIS. Ye gods, what garlic I have lost! But here comes Amphitheus returned from Lacedaemon. Welcome, Amphitheus.

AMPHITHEUS. No, there is no welcome for me and I fly as fast as I can, for I am pursued by the Acharnians.

DICAEOPOLIS. Why, what has happened?

AMPHITHEUS. I was hurrying to bring your treaty of truce, but some old dotards from Acharnae got scent of the thing; they are veterans of Marathon, tough as oak or maple, of which they are made for sure — rough and ruthless. They all set to a-crying, "Wretch! you are the bearer of a treaty, and the enemy has only just cut our vines!" Meanwhile they were gathering stones in their cloaks, so I fled and they ran after me shouting.

DICAEOPOLIS. Let ‘em shout as much as they please! But have you brought me a treaty?

AMPHITHEUS. Most certainly, here are three samples to select from, this one is five years old; take it and taste.

DICAEOPOLIS. Faugh!

AMPHITHEUS. Well?

DICAEOPOLIS. It does not please me; it smells of pitch and of the ships they are fitting out.

AMPHITHEUS. Here is another, ten years old; taste it.

DICAEOPOLIS. It smells strongly of the delegates, who go round the towns to chide the allies for their slowness.

AMPHITHEUS. This last is a truce of thirty years, both on sea and land.

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh! by Bacchus! what a bouquet! It has the aroma of nectar and ambrosia; this does not say to us, “Provision yourselves for three days.” But it lisps the gentle numbers, “Go whither you will.” I accept it, ratify it, drink it at one draught and consign the Acharnians to limbo. Freed from the war and its ills, I shall keep the Dionysia in the country.

AMPHITHEUS. And I shall run away, for I’m mortally afraid of the Acharnians.

CHORUS. This way all! Let us follow our man; we will demand him of everyone we meet; the public weal makes his seizure imperative. Ho, there! tell me which way the bearer of the truce has gone; he has escaped us, he has disappeared. Curse old age! When I was young, in the days when I followed Phayllus, running with a sack of coals on my back, this wretch would not have eluded my pursuit, let him be as swift as he will; but now my limbs are stiff; old Lacratides feels his legs are weighty and the traitor escapes me. No, no, let us follow him; old Acharnians like ourselves shall not be set at naught by a scoundrel, who has dared, great gods! to conclude a truce, when I wanted the war continued with double fury in order to avenge my ruined lands. No mercy for our foes until I have pierced their hearts like a sharp reed, so that they dare

never again ravage my vineyards. Come, let us seek the rascal; let us look everywhere, carrying our stones in our hands; let us hunt him from place to place until we trap him; I could never, never tire of the delight of stoning him.

DICAEOPOLIS. Peace! profane men!

CHORUS. Silence all! Friends, do you hear the sacred formula? Here is he, whom we seek! This way, all! Get out of his way, surely he comes to offer an oblation.

DICAEOPOLIS. Peace, profane men! Let the basket-bearer come forward, and thou, Xanthias, hold the phallus well upright.

WIFE OF DICAEOPOLIS. Daughter, set down the basket and let us begin the sacrifice.

DAUGHTER OF DICAEOPOLIS. Mother, hand me the ladle, that I may spread the sauce on the cake.

DICAEOPOLIS. It is well! Oh, mighty Bacchus, it is with joy that, freed from military duty, I and all mine perform this solemn rite and offer thee this sacrifice; grant, that I may keep the rural Dionysia without hindrance and that this truce of thirty years may be propitious for me.

WIFE OF DICAEOPOLIS. Come, my child, carry the basket gracefully and with a grave, demure face. Happy he, who shall be your possessor and embrace you so firmly at dawn, that you belch wind like a weasel. Go forward, and have a care they don't snatch your jewels in the crowd.

DICAEOPOLIS. Xanthias, walk behind the basket-bearer and hold the phallus well erect; I will follow, singing the Phallic hymn; thou, wife, look on from the top of the terrace. Forward! Oh, Phales, companion of the orgies of Bacchus, night reveller, god of adultery, friend of young men, these past six years I have not been able to invoke thee. With what joy I return to my farmstead, thanks to the truce I have concluded, freed from cares, from fighting and from Lamachuses! How much sweeter, Phales, oh, Phales, is it to surprise Thratta, the pretty wood-maid, Strymodorus' slave, stealing wood from Mount Phelleus, to catch her under the arms, to throw her on the ground and possess her! Oh, Phales, Phales! If thou wilt drink and bemuse thyself with me, we will to-morrow consume some good dish in honour of the peace, and I will hang up my

buckler over the smoking hearth.

CHORUS. It is he, he himself. Stone him, stone him, stone him, strike the wretch. All, all of you, pelt him, pelt him!

DICAEOPOLIS. What is this? By Heracles, you will smash my pot.

CHORUS. It is you that we are stoning, you miserable scoundrel.

DICAEOPOLIS. And for what sin, Acharnian Elders, tell me that!

CHORUS. You ask that, you impudent rascal, traitor to your country; you alone amongst us all have concluded a truce, and you dare to look us in the face!

DICAEOPOLIS. But you do not know *why* I have treated for peace. Listen!

CHORUS. Listen to you? No, no, you are about to die, we will annihilate you with our stones.

DICAEOPOLIS. But first of all, listen. Stop, my friends.

CHORUS. I will hear nothing; do not address me; I hate you more than I do
Cleon, whom one day I shall flay to make sandals for the Knights.
Listen to your long speeches, after you have treated with the Laconians!
No, I will punish you.

DICAEOPOLIS. Friends, leave the Laconians out of debate and consider only whether I have not done well to conclude my truce.

CHORUS. Done well! when you have treated with a people who know neither gods, nor truth, nor faith.

DICAEOPOLIS. We attribute too much to the Laconians; as for myself, I know that they are not the cause of all our troubles.

CHORUS. Oh, indeed, rascal! You dare to use such language to me and then expect me to spare you!

DICAEOPOLIS. No, no, they are not the cause of all our troubles, and I who address you claim to be able to prove that they have much to complain of in us.

CHORUS. This passes endurance; my heart bounds with fury. Thus you dare to defend our enemies.

DICAEOPOLIS. Were my head on the block I would uphold what I say and rely on the approval of the people.

CHORUS. Comrades, let us hurl our stones and dye this fellow purple.

DICAEOPOLIS. What black fire-brand has inflamed your heart! You will not hear me? You really will not, Acharnians?

CHORUS. No, a thousand times, no.

DICAEOPOLIS. This is a hateful injustice.

CHORUS. May I die, if I listen.

DICAEOPOLIS. Nay, nay! have mercy, have mercy, Acharnians.

CHORUS. You shall die.

DICAEOPOLIS. Well, blood for blood! I will kill your dearest friend. I have here the hostages of Acharnae; I shall disembowel them.

CHORUS. Acharnians, what means this threat? Has he got one of our children in his house? What gives him such audacity?

DICAEOPOLIS. Stone me, if it please you; I shall avenge myself on this. *(Shows a basket.)* Let us see whether you have any love for your coals.

CHORUS. Great gods! this basket is our fellow-citizen. Stop, stop, in heaven's name!

DICAEOPOLIS. I shall dismember it despite your cries; I will listen to nothing.

CHORUS. How! will you kill this coal-basket, my beloved comrade?

DICAEOPOLIS. Just now, you did not listen to me.

CHORUS. Well, speak now, if you will; tell us, tell us you have a weakness for the Lacedaemonians. I consent to anything; never will I forsake this dear little

basket.

DICAEOPOLIS. First, throw down your stones.

CHORUS. There! ’tis done. And you, do you put away your sword.

DICAEOPOLIS. Let me see that no stones remain concealed in your cloaks.

CHORUS. They are all on the ground; see how we shake our garments. Come, no haggling, lay down your sword; we threw away everything while crossing from one side of the stage to the other.

DICAEOPOLIS. What cries of anguish you would have uttered had these coals of Parnes been dismembered, and yet it came very near it; had they perished, their death would have been due to the folly of their fellow-citizens. The poor basket was so frightened, look, it has shed a thick black dust over me, the same as a cuttle-fish does. What an irritable temper! You shout and throw stones, you will not hear my arguments — not even when I propose to speak in favour of the Lacedaemonians with my head on the block; and yet I cling to my life.

CHORUS. Well then, bring out a block before your door, scoundrel, and let us hear the good grounds you can give us; I am curious to know them. Now mind, as you proposed yourself, place your head on the block and speak.

DICAEOPOLIS. Here is the block; and, though I am but a very sorry speaker, I wish nevertheless to talk freely of the Lacedaemonians and without the protection of my buckler. Yet I have many reasons for fear. I know our rustics; they are delighted if some braggart comes, and rightly or wrongly loads both them and their city with praise and flattery; they do not see that such toad-eaters are traitors, who sell them for gain. As for the old men, I know their weakness; they only seek to overwhelm the accused with their votes. Nor have I forgotten how Cleon treated me because of my comedy last year; he dragged me before the Senate and there he uttered endless slanders against me; ’twas a tempest of abuse, a deluge of lies. Through what a slough of mud he dragged me! I nigh perished. Permit me, therefore, before I speak, to dress in the manner most likely to draw pity.

CHORUS. What evasions, subterfuges and delays! Hold! here is the sombre helmet of Pluto with its thick bristling plume; Hieronymus lends it to you; then open Sisyphus’ bag of wiles; but hurry, hurry, pray, for our discussion does not

admit of delay.

DICAEOPOLIS. The time has come for me to manifest my courage, so I will go and seek Euripides. Ho! slave, slave!

SLAVE. Who's there?

DICAEOPOLIS. Is Euripides at home?

SLAVE. He is and he isn't; understand that, if you have wit for't.

DICAEOPOLIS. How? He is and he isn't!

SLAVE. Certainly, old man; busy gathering subtle fancies here and there, his mind is not in the house, but he himself is; perched aloft, he is composing a tragedy.

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh, Euripides, you are indeed happy to have a slave so quick at repartee! Now, fellow, call your master.

SLAVE. Impossible!

DICAEOPOLIS. So much the worse. But I will not go. Come, let us knock at the door. Euripides, my little Euripides, my darling Euripides, listen; never had man greater right to your pity. It is Dicaeopolis of the Chollidan Deme who calls you. Do you hear?

EURIPIDES. I have no time to waste.

DICAEOPOLIS. Very well, have yourself wheeled out here.

EURIPIDES. Impossible.

DICAEOPOLIS. Nevertheless….

EURIPIDES. Well, let them roll me out; as to coming down, I have not the time.

DICAEOPOLIS. Euripides….

EURIPIDES. What words strike my ear?

DICAEOPOLIS. You perch aloft to compose tragedies, when you might just as well do them on the ground. I am not astonished at your introducing cripples on the stage. And why dress in these miserable tragic rags? I do not wonder that your heroes are beggars. But, Euripides, on my knees I beseech you, give me the tatters of some old piece: for I have to treat the Chorus to a long speech, and if I do it ill it is all over with me.

EURIPIDES. What rags do you prefer? Those in which I rigged out
Aeneus on the stage, that unhappy, miserable old man?

DICAEOPOLIS. No, I want those of some hero still more unfortunate.

EURIPIDES. Of Phoenix, the blind man?

DICAEOPOLIS. No, not of Phoenix, you have another hero more unfortunate than him.

EURIPIDES. Now, what tatters *does* he want? Do you mean those of the beggar Philoctetes?

DICAEOPOLIS. No, of another far more the mendicant.

EURIPIDES. Is it the filthy dress of the lame fellow, Bellerophon?

DICAEOPOLIS. No, 'tis not Bellerophon; he, whom I mean, was not only lame and a beggar, but boastful and a fine speaker.

EURIPIDES. Ah! I know, it is Telephus, the Mysian.

DICAEOPOLIS. Yes, Telephus. Give me his rags, I beg of you.

EURIPIDES. Slave! give him Telephus' tatters; they are on top of the rags of Thyestes and mixed with those of Ino.

SLAVE. Catch hold! here they are.

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh! Zeus, whose eye pierces everywhere and embraces all, permit me to assume the most wretched dress on earth. Euripides, cap your kindness by giving me the little Mysian hat, that goes so well with these tatters. I must to-day have the look of a beggar; "be what I am, but not appear to be"; the

audience will know well who I am, but the Chorus will be fools enough not to, and I shall dupe ‘em with my subtle phrases.

EURIPIDES. I will give you the hat; I love the clever tricks of an ingenious brain like yours.

DICAEOPOLIS. Rest happy, and may it befall Telephus as I wish. Ah! I already feel myself filled with quibbles. But I must have a beggar’s staff.

EURIPIDES. Here you are, and now get you gone from this porch.

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh, my soul! You see how you are driven from this house, when I still need so many accessories. But let us be pressing, obstinate, importunate. Euripides, give me a little basket with a lamp alight inside.

EURIPIDES. Whatever do you want such a thing as that for?

DICAEOPOLIS. I do not need it, but I want it all the same.

EURIPIDES. You importune me; get you gone!

DICAEOPOLIS. Alas! may the gods grant you a destiny as brilliant as your mother’s.

EURIPIDES. Leave me in peace.

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh! just a little broken cup.

EURIPIDES. Take it and go and hang yourself. What a tiresome fellow!

DICAEOPOLIS. Ah! you do not know all the pain you cause me. Dear, good Euripides, nothing beyond a small pipkin stoppered with a sponge.

EURIPIDES. Miserable man! You are robbing me of an entire tragedy.
Here, take it and be off.

DICAEOPOLIS. I am going, but, great gods! I need one thing more; unless I have it, I am a dead man. Hearken, my little Euripides, only give me this and I go, never to return. For pity’s sake, do give me a few small herbs for my basket.

EURIPIDES. You wish to ruin me then. Here, take what you want; but it is all

over with my pieces!

DICAEOPOLIS. I won't ask another thing; I'm going. I am too importunate and forget that I rouse against me the hate of kings. — Ah! wretch that I am! I am lost! I have forgotten one thing, without which all the rest is as nothing. Euripides, my excellent Euripides, my dear little Euripides, may I die if I ask you again for the smallest present; only one, the last, absolutely the last; give me some of the chervil your mother left you in her will.

EURIPIDES. Insolent hound! Slave, lock the door.

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh, my soul! I must go away without the chervil. Art thou sensible of the dangerous battle we are about to engage upon in defending the Lacedaemonians? Courage, my soul, we must plunge into the midst of it. Dost thou hesitate and art thou fully steeped in Euripides? That's right! do not falter, my poor heart, and let us risk our head to say what we hold for truth. Courage and boldly to the front. I wonder I am so brave!

CHORUS. What do you purport doing? what are you going to say? What an impudent fellow! what a brazen heart! To dare to stake his head and uphold an opinion contrary to that of us all! And he does not tremble to face this peril! Come, it is you who desired it, speak!

DICAEOPOLIS. Spectators, be not angered if, although I am a beggar, I dare in a Comedy to speak before the people of Athens of the public weal; Comedy too can sometimes discern what is right. I shall not please, but I shall say what is true. Besides, Cleon shall not be able to accuse me of attacking Athens before strangers; we are by ourselves at the festival of the Lenaea; the period when our allies send us their tribute and their soldiers is not yet. Here is only the pure wheat without chaff; as to the resident strangers settled among us, they and the citizens are one, like the straw and the ear.

I detest the Lacedaemonians with all my heart, and may Posidon, the god of Taenarus, cause an earthquake and overturn their dwellings! My vines also have been cut. But come *(there are only friends who hear me)*, why accuse the Laconians of all our woes? Some men *(I do not say the city, note particularly, that I do not say the city)*, some wretches, lost in vices, bereft of honour, who were not even citizens of good stamp, but strangers, have accused the Megarians of introducing their produce fraudulently, and not a cucumber, a leveret, a

sucking-pig, a clove of garlic, a lump of salt was seen without its being said, "Halloa! these come from Megara," and their being instantly confiscated. Thus far the evil was not serious, and we were the only sufferers. But now some young drunkards go to Megara and carry off the courtesan Simaetha; the Megarians, hurt to the quick, run off in turn with two harlots of the house of Aspasia; and so for three gay women Greece is set ablaze. Then Pericles, aflame with ire on his Olympian height, let loose the lightning, caused the thunder to roll, upset Greece and passed an edict, which ran like the song, "That the Megarians be banished both from our land and from our markets and from the sea and from the continent." Meanwhile the Megarians, who were beginning to die of hunger, begged the Lacedaemonians to bring about the abolition of the decree, of which those harlots were the cause; several times we refused their demand; and from that time there was a horrible clatter of arms everywhere. You will say that Sparta was wrong, but what should she have done? Answer that. Suppose that a Lacedaemonian had seized a little Seriphian dog on any pretext and had sold it, would you have endured it quietly? Far from it, you would at once have sent three hundred vessels to sea, and what an uproar there would have been through all the city! there 'tis a band of noisy soldiery, here a brawl about the election of a Trierarch; elsewhere pay is being distributed, the Pallas figure-heads are being regilded, crowds are surging under the market porticos, encumbered with wheat that is being measured, wine-skins, oar-leathers, garlic, olives, onions in nets; everywhere are chaplets, sprats, flute-girls, black eyes; in the arsenal bolts are being noisily driven home, sweeps are being made and fitted with leathers; we hear nothing but the sound of whistles, of flutes and fifes to encourage the work-folk. That is what you assuredly would have done, and would not Telephus have done the same? So I come to my general conclusion; we have no common sense.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS. Oh! wretch! oh! infamous man! You are naught but a beggar and yet you dare to talk to us like this! you insult their worships the informers!

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS. By Posidon! he speaks the truth; he has not lied in a single detail.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS. But though it be true, need he say it? But you'll have no great cause to be proud of your insolence!

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS. Where are you running to? Don't you move; if you

strike this man I shall be at you.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS. Lamachus, whose glance flashes lightning, whose plume petrifies thy foes, help! Oh! Lamachus, my friend, the hero of my tribe and all of you, both officers and soldiers, defenders of our walls, come to my aid; else is it all over with me!

LAMACHUS. Whence comes this cry of battle? where must I bring my aid? where must I sow dread? who wants me to uncase my dreadful Gorgon's head?

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh, Lamachus, great hero! Your plumes and your cohorts terrify me.

CHORUS. This man, Lamachus, incessantly abuses Athens.

LAMACHUS. You are but a mendicant and you dare to use language of this sort?

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh, brave Lamachus, forgive a beggar who speaks at hazard.

LAMACHUS. But what have you said? Let us hear.

DICAEOPOLIS. I know nothing about it; the sight of weapons makes me dizzy. Oh! I adjure you, take that fearful Gorgon somewhat farther away.

LAMACHUS. There.

DICAEOPOLIS. Now place it face downwards on the ground.

LAMACHUS. It is done.

DICAEOPOLIS. Give me a plume out of your helmet.

LAMACHUS. Here is a feather.

DICAEOPOLIS. And hold my head while I vomit; the plumes have turned my stomach.

LAMACHUS. Hah! what are you proposing to do? do you want to make yourself vomit with this feather?

DICAEOPOLIS. Is it a feather? what bird's? a braggart's?

LAMACHUS. Ah! ah! I will rip you open.

DICAEOPOLIS. No, no, Lamachus! Violence is out of place here! But as you are so strong, why did you not circumcise me? You have all you want for the operation there.

LAMACHUS. A beggar dares thus address a general!

DICAEOPOLIS. How? Am I a beggar?

LAMACHUS. What are you then?

DICAEOPOLIS. Who am I? A good citizen, not ambitious; a soldier, who has fought well since the outbreak of the war, whereas you are but a vile mercenary.

LAMACHUS. They elected me….

DICAEOPOLIS. Yes, three cuckoos did! If I have concluded peace, 'twas disgust that drove me; for I see men with hoary heads in the ranks and young fellows of your age shirking service. Some are in Thrace getting an allowance of three drachmae, such fellows as Tisameophoenippus and Panurgipparchides. The others are with Chares or in Chaonia, men like Geretotheodorus and Diomialazon; there are some of the same kidney, too, at Camarina and at Gela, the laughing-stock of all and sundry.

LAMACHUS. They were elected.

DICAEOPOLIS. And why do you always receive your pay, when none of these others ever get any? Speak, Marilades, you have grey hair; well then, have you ever been entrusted with a mission? See! he shakes his head. Yet he is an active as well as a prudent man. And you, Dracyllus, Euphorides or Prinides, have you knowledge of Ecbatana or Chaonia? You say no, do you not? Such offices are good for the son of Caesyra and Lamachus, who, but yesterday ruined with debt, never pay their shot, and whom all their friends avoid as foot passengers dodge the folks who empty their slops out of window.

LAMACHUS. Oh! in freedom's name! are such exaggerations to be borne?

DICAEOPOLIS. Lamachus is well content; no doubt he is well paid, you know.

LAMACHUS. But I propose always to war with the Peloponnesians, both at sea, on land and everywhere to make them tremble, and trounce them soundly.

DICAEOPOLIS. For my own part, I make proclamation to all Peloponnesians, Megarians and Boeotians, that to them my markets are open; but I debar Lamachus from entering them.

CHORUS. Convinced by this man's speech, the folk have changed their view and approve him for having concluded peace. But let us prepare for the recital of the parabasis.

Never since our poet presented Comedies, has he praised himself upon the stage; but, having been slandered by his enemies amongst the volatile Athenians, accused of scoffing at his country and of insulting the people, to-day he wishes to reply and regain for himself the inconstant Athenians. He maintains that he has done much that is good for you; if you no longer allow yourselves to be too much hoodwinked by strangers or seduced by flattery, if in politics you are no longer the ninnies you once were, it is thanks to him. Formerly, when delegates from other cities wanted to deceive you, they had but to style you, "the people crowned with violets," and, at the word "violets" you at once sat erect on the tips of your bums. Or, if to tickle your vanity, someone spoke of "rich and sleek Athens," in return for that 'sleekness' he would get all, because he spoke of you as he would have of anchovies in oil. In cautioning you against such wiles, the poet has done you great service as well as in forcing you to understand what is really the democratic principle. Thus, the strangers, who came to pay their tributes, wanted to see this great poet, who had dared to speak the truth to Athens. And so far has the fame of his boldness reached that one day the Great King, when questioning the Lacedaemonian delegates, first asked them which of the two rival cities was the superior at sea, and then immediately demanded at which it was that the comic poet directed his biting satire. "Happy that city," he added, "if it listens to his counsel; it will grow in power, and its victory is assured." This is why the Lacedaemonians offer you peace, if you will cede them Aegina; not that they care for the isle, but they wish to rob you of your poet. As for you, never lose him, who will always fight for the cause of justice in his Comedies; he promises you that his precepts will lead you to happiness, though he uses neither flattery, nor bribery, nor intrigue, nor deceit; instead of loading you with praise, he will point you to the better way. I scoff at Cleon's

tricks and plotting; honesty and justice shall fight my cause; never will you find me a political poltroon, a prostitute to the highest bidder.

I invoke thee, Acharnian Muse, fierce and fell as the devouring fire; sudden as the spark that bursts from the crackling oaken coal when roused by the quickening fan to fry little fishes, while others knead the dough or whip the sharp Thasian pickle with rapid hand, so break forth, my Muse, and inspire thy tribesmen with rough, vigorous, stirring strains.

We others, now old men and heavy with years, we reproach the city; so many are the victories we have gained for the Athenian fleets that we well deserve to be cared for in our declining life; yet far from this, we are ill-used, harassed with law-suits, delivered over to the scorn of stripling orators. Our minds and bodies being ravaged with age, Posidon should protect us, yet we have no other support than a staff. When standing before the judge, we can scarcely stammer forth the fewest words, and of justice we see but its barest shadow, whereas the accuser, desirous of conciliating the younger men, overwhelms us with his ready rhetoric; he drags us before the judge, presses us with questions, lays traps for us; the onslaught troubles, upsets and rends poor old Tithonus, who, crushed with age, stands tongue-tied; sentenced to a fine, he weeps, he sobs and says to his friend, "This fine robs me of the last trifle that was to have bought my coffin."

Is this not a scandal? What! the clepsydra is to kill the white-haired veteran, who, in fierce fighting, has so oft covered himself with glorious sweat, whose valour at Marathon saved the country! 'Twas we who pursued on the field of Marathon, whereas now 'tis wretches who pursue us to the death and crush us! What would Marpsias reply to this? What an injustice, that a man, bent with age like Thucydides, should be brow-beaten by this braggart advocate, Cephisodemus, who is as savage as the Scythian desert he was born in! Is it not to convict him from the outset? I wept tears of pity when I saw an Archer maltreat this old man, who, by Ceres, when he was young and the true Thucydides, would not have permitted an insult from Ceres herself! At that date he would have floored ten miserable orators, he would have terrified three thousand Archers with his shouts; he would have pierced the whole line of the enemy with his shafts. Ah! but if you will not leave the aged in peace, decree that the advocates be matched; thus the old man will only be confronted with a toothless greybeard, the young will fight with the braggart, the ignoble with the son of Clinias; make a law that in future, the old man can only be summoned and convicted at the courts by the aged and the young man by the youth.

DICAEOPOLIS. These are the confines of my market-place. All Peloponnesians, Megarians, Boeotians, have the right to come and trade here, provided they sell their wares to me and not to Lamachus. As market-inspectors I appoint these three whips of Leprean leather, chosen by lot. Warned away are all informers and all men of Phasis. They are bringing me the pillar on which the treaty is inscribed and I shall erect it in the centre of the market, well in sight of all.

A MEGARIAN. Hail! market of Athens, beloved of Megarians. Let Zeus, the patron of friendship, witness, I regretted you as a mother mourns her son. Come, poor little daughters of an unfortunate father, try to find something to eat; listen to me with the full heed of an empty belly. Which would you prefer? To be sold or to cry with hunger.

DAUGHTERS. To be sold, to be sold!

MEGARIAN. That is my opinion too. But who would make so sorry a deal as to buy you? Ah! I recall me a Megarian trick; I am going to disguise you as little porkers, that I am offering for sale. Fit your hands with these hoofs and take care to appear the issue of a sow of good breed, for, if I am forced to take you back to the house, by Hermes! you will suffer cruelly of hunger! Then fix on these snouts and cram yourselves into this sack. Forget not to grunt and to say wee-wee like the little pigs that are sacrificed in the Mysteries. I must summon Dicaeopolis. Where is he? Dicaeopolis, will you buy some nice little porkers?

DICAEOPOLIS. Who are you? a Megarian?

MEGARIAN. I have come to your market.

DICAEOPOLIS. Well, how are things at Megara?

MEGARIAN. We are crying with hunger at our firesides.

DICAEOPOLIS. The fireside is jolly enough with a piper. But what else is doing at Megara, eh?

MEGARIAN. What else? When I left for the market, the authorities were taking steps to let us die in the quickest manner.

DICAEOPOLIS. That is the best way to get you out of all your troubles.

MEGARIAN. True.

DICAEOPOLIS. What other news of Megara? What is wheat selling at?

MEGARIAN. With us it is valued as highly as the very gods in heaven!

DICAEOPOLIS. Is it salt that you are bringing?

MEGARIAN. Are you not holding back the salt?

DICAEOPOLIS. 'Tis garlic then?

MEGARIAN. What! garlic! do you not at every raid grub up the ground with your pikes to pull out every single head?

DICAEOPOLIS. What *do* you bring then?

MEGARIAN. Little sows, like those they immolate at the Mysteries.

DICAEOPOLIS. Ah! very well, show me them.

MEGARIAN. They are very fine; feel their weight. See! how fat and fine.

DICAEOPOLIS. But what is this?

MEGARIAN. A *sow*, for a certainty.

DICAEOPOLIS. You say a sow! of what country, then?

MEGARIAN. From Megara. What! is that not a sow then?

DICAEOPOLIS. No, I don't believe it is.

MEGARIAN. This is too much! what an incredulous man! He says 'tis not a sow; but we will stake, an you will, a measure of salt ground up with thyme, that in good Greek this is called a sow and nothing else.

DICAEOPOLIS. But a sow of the human kind.

MEGARIAN. Without question, by Diocles! of my own breed! Well! What think you? will you hear them squeal?

DICAEOPOLIS. Well, yes, i' faith, I will.

MEGARIAN. Cry quickly, wee sowlet; squeak up, hussy, or by Hermes! I take you back to the house.

GIRL. Wee-wee, wee-wee!

MEGARIAN. Is that a little sow, or not?

DICAEOPOLIS. Yes, it seems so; but let it grow up, and it will be a fine fat cunt.

MEGARIAN. In five years it will be just like its mother.

DICAEOPOLIS. But it cannot be sacrificed.

MEGARIAN. And why not?

DICAEOPOLIS. It has no tail.

MEGARIAN. Because it is quite young, but in good time it will have a big one, thick and red.

DICAEOPOLIS. The two are as like as two peas.

MEGARIAN. They are born of the same father and mother; let them be fattened, let them grow their bristles, and they will be the finest sows you can offer to Aphrodité.

DICAEOPOLIS. But sows are not immolated to Aphrodité.

MEGARIAN. Not sows to Aphrodité! Why, 'tis the only goddess to whom they are offered! the flesh of my sows will be excellent on the spit.

DICAEOPOLIS. Can they eat alone? They no longer need their mother!

MEGARIAN. Certainly not, nor their father.

DICAEOPOLIS. What do they like most?

MEGARIAN. Whatever is given them; but ask for yourself.

DICAEOPOLIS. Speak! little sow.

DAUGHTER. Wee-wee, wee-wee!

DICAEOPOLIS. Can you eat chick-pease?

DAUGHTER. Wee-wee, wee-wee, wee-wee!

DICAEOPOLIS. And Attic figs?

DAUGHTER. Wee-wee, wee-wee!

DICAEOPOLIS. What sharp squeaks at the name of figs. Come, let some figs be brought for these little pigs. Will they eat them? Goodness! how they munch them, what a grinding of teeth, mighty Heracles! I believe those pigs hail from the land of the Voracians. But surely, 'tis impossible they have bolted all the figs!

MEGARIAN. Yes, certainly, bar this one that I took from them.

DICAEOPOLIS. Ah! what funny creatures! For what sum will you sell them?

MEGARIAN. I will give you one for a bunch of garlic, and the other, if you like, for a quart measure of salt.

DICAEOPOLIS. I buy them of you. Wait for me here.

MEGARIAN. The deal is done. Hermes, god of good traders, grant I may sell both my wife and my mother in the same way!

AN INFORMER. Hi! fellow, what countryman are you?

MEGARIAN. I am a pig-merchant from Megara.

INFORMER. I shall denounce both your pigs and yourself as public enemies.

MEGARIAN. Ah! here our troubles begin afresh!

INFORMER. Let go that sack. I will punish your Megarian lingo.

MEGARIAN. Dicaeopolis, Dicaeopolis, they want to denounce me.

DICAEOPOLIS. Who dares do this thing? Inspectors, drive out the Informers. Ah! you offer to enlighten us without a lamp!

INFORMER. What! I may not denounce our enemies?

DICAEOPOLIS. Have a care for yourself, if you don't go off pretty quick to denounce elsewhere.

MEGARIAN. What a plague to Athens!

DICAEOPOLIS. Be reassured, Megarian. Here is the value of your two swine, the garlic and the salt. Farewell and much happiness!

MEGARIAN. Ah! we never have that amongst us.

DICAEOPOLIS. Well! may the inopportune wish apply to myself.

MEGARIAN. Farewell, dear little sows, and seek, far from your father, to munch your bread with salt, if they give you any.

CHORUS. Here is a man truly happy. See how everything succeeds to his wish. Peacefully seated in his market, he will earn his living; woe to Ctesias, and all other informers, who dare to enter there! You will not be cheated as to the value of wares, you will not again see Prepis wiping his foul rump, nor will Cleonymus jostle you; you will take your walks, clothed in a fine tunic, without meeting Hyperbolus and his unceasing quibblings, without being accosted on the public place by any importunate fellow, neither by Cratinus, shaven in the fashion of the debauchees, nor by this musician, who plagues us with his silly improvisations, Artemo, with his arm-pits stinking as foul as a goat, like his father before him. You will not be the butt of the villainous Pauson's jeers, nor of Lysistratus, the disgrace of the Cholargian deme, who is the incarnation of all the vices, and endures cold and hunger more than thirty days in the month.

A BOEOTIAN. By Heracles! my shoulder is quite black and blue. Ismenias, put the penny-royal down there very gently, and all of you, musicians from Thebes, pipe with your bone flutes into a dog's rump.

DICAEOPOLIS. Enough, enough, get you gone. Rascally hornets, away with you! Whence has sprung this accursed swarm of Cheris fellows which comes assailing my door?

BOEOTIAN. Ah! by Iolas! Drive them off, my dear host, you will please me immensely; all the way from Thebes, they were there piping behind me and have completely stripped my penny-royal of its blossom. But will you buy anything of me, some chickens or some locusts?

DICAEOPOLIS. Ah! good day, Boeotian, eater of good round loaves.
What do you bring?

BOEOTIAN. All that is good in Boeotia, marjoram, penny-royal, rush-mats, lamp-wicks, ducks, jays, woodcocks, waterfowl, wrens, divers.

DICAEOPOLIS. 'Tis a very hail of birds that beats down on my market.

BOEOTIAN. I also bring geese, hares, foxes, moles, hedgehogs, cats, lyres, martins, otters and eels from the Copaic lake.

DICAEOPOLIS. Ah! my friend, you, who bring me the most delicious of fish, let me salute your eels.

BOEOTIAN. Come, thou, the eldest of my fifty Copaic virgins, come and complete the joy of our host.

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh! my well-beloved, thou object of my long regrets, thou art here at last then, thou, after whom the comic poets sigh, thou, who art dear to Morychus. Slaves, hither with the stove and the bellows. Look at this charming eel, that returns to us after six long years of absence. Salute it, my children; as for myself, I will supply coal to do honour to the stranger. Take it into my house; death itself could not separate me from her, if cooked with beet leaves.

BOEOTIAN. And what will you give me in return?

DICAEOPOLIS. It will pay for your market dues. And as to the rest, what do you wish to sell me?

BOEOTIAN. Why, everything.

DICAEOPOLIS. On what terms? For ready-money or in wares from these parts?

BOEOTIAN. I would take some Athenian produce, that we have not got in Boeotia.

DICAEOPOLIS. Phaleric anchovies, pottery?

BOEOTIAN. Anchovies, pottery? But these we have. I want produce that is wanting with us and that is plentiful here.

DICAEOPOLIS. Ah! I have the very thing; take away an Informer, packed up carefully as crockery-ware.

BOEOTIAN. By the twin gods! I should earn big money, if I took one; I would exhibit him as an ape full of spite.

DICAEOPOLIS. Hah! here we have Nicarchus, who comes to denounce you.

BOEOTIAN. How small he is!

DICAEOPOLIS. But in his case the whole is one mass of ill-nature.

NICARCHUS. Whose are these goods?

DICAEOPOLIS. Mine; they come from Boeotia, I call Zeus to witness.

NICARCHUS. I denounce them as coming from an enemy's country.

BOEOTIAN. What! you declare war against birds?

NICARCHUS. And I am going to denounce you too.

BOEOTIAN. What harm have I done you?

NICARCHUS. I will say it for the benefit of those that listen; you introduce lamp-wicks from an enemy's country.

DICAEOPOLIS. Then you go as far as denouncing a wick.

NICARCHUS. It needs but one to set an arsenal afire.

DICAEOPOLIS. A wick set an arsenal ablaze! But how, great gods?

NICARCHUS. Should a Boeotian attach it to an insect's wing, and, taking advantage of a violent north wind, throw it by means of a tube into the arsenal and the fire once get hold of the vessels, everything would soon be devoured by

the flames.

DICAEOPOLIS. Ah! wretch! an insect and a wick would devour everything. *(He strikes him.)* NICARCHUS *(to the Chorus)*. You will bear witness, that he mishandles me.

DICAEOPOLIS. Shut his mouth. Give him some hay; I am going to pack him up as a vase, that he may not get broken on the road.

CHORUS. Pack up your goods carefully, friend; that the stranger may not break it when taking it away.

DICAEOPOLIS. I shall take great care with it, for one would say he is cracked already; he rings with a false note, which the gods abhor.

CHORUS. But what will be done with him?

DICAEOPOLIS. This is a vase good for all purposes; it will be used as a vessel for holding all foul things, a mortar for pounding together law-suits, a lamp for spying upon accounts, and as a cup for the mixing up and poisoning of everything.

CHORUS. None could ever trust a vessel for domestic use that has such a ring about it.

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh! it is strong, my friend, and will never get broken, if care is taken to hang it head downwards.

CHORUS. There! it is well packed now!

BOEOTIAN. Marry, I will proceed to carry off my bundle.

CHORUS. Farewell, worthiest of strangers, take this Informer, good for anything, and fling him where you like.

DICAEOPOLIS. Bah! this rogue has given me enough trouble to pack! Here! Boeotian, pick up your pottery.

BOEOTIAN. Stoop, Ismenias, that I may put it on your shoulder, and be very careful with it.

DICAEOPOLIS. You carry nothing worth having; however, take it, for you will profit by your bargain; the Informers will bring you luck.

A SERVANT OF LAMACHUS. Dicaeopolis!

DICAEOPOLIS. What do want crying this gait?

SERVANT. Lamachus wants to keep the Feast of Cups, and I come by his order to bid you one drachma for some thrushes and three more for a Copaic eel.

DICAEOPOLIS. And who is this Lamachus, who demands an eel?

SERVANT. 'Tis the terrible, indefatigable Lamachus, he, who is always brandishing his fearful Gorgon's head and the three plumes which o'ershadow his helmet.

DICAEOPOLIS. No, no, he will get nothing, even though he gave me his buckler. Let him eat salt fish, while he shakes his plumes, and, if he comes here making any din, I shall call the inspectors. As for myself, I shall take away all these goods; I go home on thrushes' wings and blackbirds' pinions.

CHORUS. You see, citizens, you see the good fortune which this man owes to his prudence, to his profound wisdom. You see how, since he has concluded peace, he buys what is useful in the household and good to eat hot. All good things flow towards him unsought. Never will I welcome the god of war in my house; never shall he chant the 'Harmodius' at my table; he is a sot, who comes feasting with those who are overflowing with good things and brings all sorts of mischief at his heels. He overthrows, ruins, rips open; 'tis vain to make him a thousand offers, "be seated, pray, drink this cup, proffered in all friendship," he burns our vine-stocks and brutally pours out the wine from our vineyards on the ground. This man, on the other hand, covers his table with a thousand dishes; proud of his good fortunes, he has had these feathers cast before his door to show us how he lives.

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh! Peace! companion of fair Aphrodité and of the sweet Graces, how charming are your features and yet I never knew it! Would that Eros might join me to thee, Eros, crowned with roses as Zeuxis shows him to us! Perhaps I seem somewhat old to you, but I am yet able to make you a threefold offering; despite my age, I could plant a long row of vines for you; then beside these some tender cuttings from the fig; finally a young vine-stock, loaded with

fruit and all round the field olive trees, which would furnish us with oil, wherewith to anoint us both at the New Moons.

HERALD. List, ye people! As was the custom of your forebears, empty a full pitcher of wine at the call of the trumpet; he, who first sees the bottom, shall get a wine-skin as round and plump as Ctesiphon's belly.

DICAEOPOLIS. Women, children, have you not heard? Faith! do you not heed the herald? Quick! let the hares boil and roast merrily; keep them a-turning; withdraw them from the flame; prepare the chaplets; reach me the skewers that I may spit the thrushes.

CHORUS. I envy you your wisdom and even more your good cheer.

DICAEOPOLIS. What then will you say when you see the thrushes roasting?

CHORUS. Ah! true indeed!

DICAEOPOLIS. Slave! stir up the fire.

CHORUS. See, how he knows his business, what a perfect cook! How well he understands the way to prepare a good dinner!

A HUSBANDMAN. Ah! woe is me!

DICAEOPOLIS. Heracles! What have we here?

HUSBANDMAN. A most miserable man.

DICAEOPOLIS. Keep your misery for yourself.

HUSBANDMAN. Ah! friend! since you alone are enjoying peace, grant me a part of your truce, were it but five years.

DICAEOPOLIS. What has happened to you?

HUSBANDMAN. I am ruined; I have lost a pair of steers.

DICAEOPOLIS. How?

HUSBANDMAN. The Boeotians seized them at Phylé.

DICAEOPOLIS. Ah! poor wretch! and yet you have not left off white?

HUSBANDMAN. Their dung made my wealth.

DICAEOPOLIS. What can I do in the matter?

HUSBANDMAN. Crying for my beasts has lost me my eyesight. Ah! if you care for poor Dercetes of Phylé, anoint mine eyes quickly with your balm of peace.

DICAEOPOLIS. But, my poor fellow, I do not practise medicine.

HUSBANDMAN. Come, I adjure you; perchance I shall recover my steers.

DICAEOPOLIS. 'Tis impossible; away, go and whine to the disciples of Pittalus.

HUSBANDMAN. Grant me but one drop of peace; pour it into this reedlet.

DICAEOPOLIS. No, not a particle; go a-weeping elsewhere.

HUSBANDMAN. Oh! oh! oh! my poor beasts!

CHORUS. This man has discovered the sweetest enjoyment in peace; he will share it with none.

DICAEOPOLIS. Pour honey over this tripe; set it before the fire to dry.

CHORUS. What lofty tones he uses! Did you hear him?

DICAEOPOLIS. Get the eels on the gridiron!

CHORUS. You are killing me with hunger; your smoke is choking your neighbours, and you split our ears with your bawling.

DICAEOPOLIS. Have this fried and let it be nicely browned.

A BRIDESMAID. Dicaeopolis! Dicaeopolis!

DICAEOPOLIS. Who are you?

BRIDESMAID. A young bridegroom sends you these viands from the marriage feast.

DICAEOPOLIS. Whoever he be, I thank him.

BRIDESMAID. And in return, he prays you to pour a glass of peace into this vase, that he may not have to go to the front and may stay at home to do his duty to his young wife.

DICAEOPOLIS. Take back, take back your viands; for a thousand drachmae I would not give a drop of peace; but who are you, pray?

BRIDESMAID. I am the bridesmaid; she wants to say something to you from the bride privately.

DICAEOPOLIS. Come, what do you wish to say? *(The bridesmaid whispers in his ear.) Ah!* what a ridiculous demand! The bride burns with longing to keep by her her husband's weapon. Come! bring hither my truce; to her alone will I give some of it, for she is a woman, and, as such, should not suffer under the war. Here, friend, reach hither your vial. And as to the manner of applying this balm, tell the bride, when a levy of soldiers is made to rub some in bed on her husband, where most needed. There, slave, take away my truce! Now, quick hither with the wine-flagon, that I may fill up the drinking bowls!

CHORUS. I see a man, striding along apace, with knitted brows; he seems to us the bearer of terrible tidings.

HERALD. Oh! toils and battles! 'tis Lamachus!

LAMACHUS. What noise resounds around my dwelling, where shines the glint of arms.

HERALD. The Generals order you forthwith to take your battalions and your plumes, and, despite the snow, to go and guard our borders. They have learnt that a band of Boeotians intend taking advantage of the feast of Cups to invade our country.

LAMACHUS. Ah! the Generals! they are numerous, but not good for much!
It's cruel, not to be able to enjoy the feast!

DICAEOPOLIS. Oh! warlike host of Lamachus!

LAMACHUS. Wretch! do you dare to jeer me?

DICAEOPOLIS. Do you want to fight this four-winged Geryon?

LAMACHUS. Oh! oh! what fearful tidings!

DICAEOPOLIS. Ah! ah! I see another herald running up; what news does he bring me?

HERALD. Dicaeopolis!

DICAEOPOLIS. What is the matter?

HERALD. Come quickly to the feast and bring your basket and your cup; 'tis the priest of Bacchus who invites you. But hasten, the guests have been waiting for you a long while. All is ready — couches, tables, cushions, chaplets, perfumes, dainties and courtesans to boot; biscuits, cakes, sesamé-bread, tarts, and — lovely dancing women, the sweetest charm of the festivity. But come with all haste.

LAMACHUS. Oh! hostile gods!

DICAEOPOLIS. This is not astounding; you have chosen this huge, great ugly Gorgon's head for your patron. You, shut the door, and let someone get ready the meal.

LAMACHUS. Slave! slave! my knapsack!

DICAEOPOLIS. Slave! slave! a basket!

LAMACHUS. Take salt and thyme, slave, and don't forget the onions.

DICAEOPOLIS. Get some fish for me; I cannot bear onions.

LAMACHUS. Slave, wrap me up a little stale salt meat in a fig-leaf.

DICAEOPOLIS. And for me some good greasy tripe in a fig-leaf; I will have it cooked here.

LAMACHUS. Bring me the plumes for my helmet.

DICAEOPOLIS. Bring me wild pigeons and thrushes.

LAMACHUS. How white and beautiful are these ostrich feathers!

DICAEOPOLIS. How fat and well browned is the flesh of this wood-pigeon!

LAMACHUS. Bring me the case for my triple plume.

DICAEOPOLIS. Pass me over that dish of hare.

LAMACHUS. *Oh!* the moths have eaten the hair of my crest!

DICAEOPOLIS. I shall always eat hare before dinner.

LAMACHUS. Hi! friend! try not to scoff at my armour.

DICAEOPOLIS. Hi! friend! will you kindly not stare at my thrushes.

LAMACHUS. Hi! friend! will you kindly not address me.

DICAEOPOLIS. I do not address you; I am scolding my slave. Shall we wager and submit the matter to Lamachus, which of the two is the best to eat, a locust or a thrush?

LAMACHUS. Insolent hound!

DICAEOPOLIS. He much prefers the locusts.

LAMACHUS. Slave, unhook my spear and bring it to me.

DICAEOPOLIS. Slave, slave, take the sausage from the fire and bring it to me.

LAMACHUS. Come, let me draw my spear from its sheath. Hold it, slave, hold it tight.

DICAEOPOLIS. And you, slave, grip, grip well hold of the skewer.

LAMACHUS. Slave, the bracings for my shield.

DICAEOPOLIS. Pull the loaves out of the oven and bring me these bracings of my stomach.

LAMACHUS. My round buckler with the Gorgon's head.

DICAEOPOLIS. My round cheese-cake.

LAMACHUS. What clumsy wit!

DICAEOPOLIS. What delicious cheese-cake!

LAMACHUS. Pour oil on the buckler. Hah! hah! I can see an old man who will be accused of cowardice.

DICAEOPOLIS. Pour honey on the cake. Hah! hah! I can see an old man who makes Lamachus of the Gorgon's head weep with rage.

LAMACHUS. Slave, full war armour.

DICAEOPOLIS. Slave, my beaker; that is *my* armour.

LAMACHUS. With this I hold my ground with any foe.

DICAEOPOLIS. And I with this with any tosspot.

LAMACHUS. Fasten the strappings to the buckler; personally I shall carry the knapsack.

DICAEOPOLIS. Pack the dinner well into the basket; personally I shall carry the cloak.

LAMACHUS. Slave, take up the buckler and let's be off. It is snowing! Ah! 'tis a question of facing the winter.

DICAEOPOLIS. Take up the basket, 'tis a question of getting to the feast.

CHORUS. We wish you both joy on your journeys, which differ so much. One goes to mount guard and freeze, while the other will drink, crowned with flowers, and then sleep with a young beauty, who will rub his tool for him.

I say it freely; may Zeus confound Antimachus, the poet-historian, the son of

Psacas! When Choregus at the Lenaea, alas! alas! he dismissed me dinnerless. May I see him devouring with his eyes a cuttle-fish, just served, well cooked, hot and properly salted; and the moment that he stretches his hand to help himself, may a dog seize it and run off with it. Such is my first wish. I also hope for him a misfortune at night. That returning all-fevered from horse practice, he may meet an Orestes, mad with drink, who breaks open his head; that wishing to seize a stone, he, in the dark, may pick up a fresh stool, hurl his missile, miss aim and hit Cratinus.

SLAVE OF LAMACHUS. Slaves of Lamachus! Water, water in a little pot! Make it warm, get ready cloths, cerate, greasy wool and bandages for his ankle. In leaping a ditch, the master has hurt himself against a stake; he has dislocated and twisted his ankle, broken his head by falling on a stone, while his Gorgon shot far away from his buckler. His mighty braggadocio plume rolled on the ground; at this sight he uttered these doleful words, "Radiant star, I gaze on thee for the last time; my eyes close to all light, I die." Having said this, he falls into the water, gets out again, meets some runaways and pursues the robbers with his spear at their backsides. But here he comes, himself. Get the door open.

LAMACHUS. Oh! heavens! oh! heavens! What cruel pain! I faint, I tremble! Alas! I die! the foe's lance has struck me! But what would hurt me most would be for Dicaeopolis to see me wounded thus and laugh at my ill-fortune.

DICAEOPOLIS *(enters with two courtesans)*. Oh! my gods! what bosoms! Hard as a quince! Come, my treasures, give me voluptuous kisses! Glue your lips to mine. Haha! I was the first to empty my cup.

LAMACHUS. Oh! cruel fate! how I suffer! accursed wounds!

DICAEOPOLIS. Hah! hah! hail! Knight Lamachus! *(Embraces Lamachus.)*
LAMACHUS. By the hostile gods! *(Bites Dicaeopolis.)*

DICAEOPOLIS. Ah! great gods!

LAMACHUS. Why do you embrace me?

DICAEOPOLIS. And why do you bite me?

LAMACHUS. 'Twas a cruel score I was paying back!

DICAEOPOLIS. Scores are not evened at the feast of Cups!

LAMACHUS. Oh! Paean, Paean!

DICAEOPOLIS. But to-day is not the feast of Paean.

LAMACHUS. Oh! support my leg, do; ah! hold it tenderly, my friends!

DICAEOPOLIS. And you, my darlings, take hold of my tool both of you!

LAMACHUS. This blow with the stone makes me dizzy; my sight grows dim.

DICAEOPOLIS. For myself, I want to get to bed; I am bursting with lustfulness, I want to be fucking in the dark.

LAMACHUS. Carry me to the surgeon Pittalus.

DICAEOPOLIS. Take me to the judges. Where is the king of the feast? The wine-skin is mine!

LAMACHUS. That spear has pierced my bones; what torture I endure!

DICAEOPOLIS. You see this empty cup! I triumph! I triumph!

CHORUS. Old man, I come at your bidding! You triumph! you triumph!

DICAEOPOLIS. Again I have brimmed my cup with unmixed wine and drained it at a draught!

CHORUS. You triumph then, brave champion; thine is the wine-skin!

DICAEOPOLIS. Follow me, singing “Triumph! Triumph!”

CHORUS. Aye! we will sing of thee, thee and thy sacred wine-skin, and we all, as we follow thee, will repeat in thine honour, “Triumph, Triumph!”

THE KNIGHTS

Anonymous translation for the Athenian Society, London, 1912

This comedy is a scurrilous attack on a single politician, the pro-war populist Cleon, who had prosecuted Aristophanes for slandering the polis in his earlier play, *The Babylonians* (426 BC), for which the young dramatist had promised revenge in *The Acharnians* (425 BC), and it was in *The Knights* (424 BC) that his revenge was wholly exacted. The play was a great success, winning the playwright the first prize at the Lenaia festival when it was produced in 424 BC.

The Knights establishes an allegory where Cleon is represented as a Paphlagonian, signifying everything that's wrong with the world. Paphlagonia was a region in modern Turkey, which was imputed to be the birthplace of Cleon. As the play opens, two slaves, Nicias and Demosthenes, allegorical representations of the historical generals, run from a house in Athens, complaining of a beating that they have just received from their master, Demos (the people), and cursing their fellow slave, Cleon, as the cause of their troubles. They inform the audience that Cleon has wheedled his way into Demos' confidence and they accuse him of misusing his privileged position for the purpose of extortion and corruption. They advise us that even the mask-makers are afraid of Cleon and that none of them could be persuaded to make a caricature of him for this play. They assure us however that we are clever enough to recognise him even without a mask. Having no idea how to solve their problems, they steal some wine from the house, the taste of which inspires them to an even bolder theft - a set of oracles that Cleon has always refused to let anyone else see. On reading these stolen oracles, they learn that Cleon is one of several peddlers destined to rule the polis and that it is his fate to be replaced by a sausage seller. As chance would have it, a sausage seller passes by at that very moment, carrying a portable kitchen.

Demosthenes informs him of his destiny. The sausage seller is not convinced at first but Demosthenes points out the myriads of people in the theatre and he assures him that his skills with sausages are all that is needed to govern them. Cleon's suspicions meanwhile have been aroused and he rushes from the house in search of trouble. He immediately finds an empty wine bowl and he loudly accuses the others of treason. Demosthenes calls upon the knights of Athens for assistance and a Chorus of them charges into the theatre. They converge on

Cleon in military formation under instructions from their leader and the politician is given rough handling, as the Chorus leader accuses him of manipulating the political and legal system for personal gain. Cleon bellows to the audience for help and the Chorus urges the sausage-seller to outshout him. There follows a shouting match between Cleon and the sausage seller with vulgar boasts and vainglorious threats on both sides as each man strives to demonstrate that he is a more shameless and unscrupulous orator than the other. The knights proclaim the sausage-seller the winner of the argument and Cleon then rushes off to the Boule to denounce them all on a trumped-up charge of treason.

Eventuyally, Agoracritus emerges triumphant from a series of contests with Cleon and he restores Demos to his former glory.

An ancient Greek depiction of a Knight – a member of the Athenian upper classes

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INTRODUCTION

This was the fourth play in order of time produced by Aristophanes on the Athenian stage; it was brought out at the Lenaean Festival, in January, 424 B.C. Of the author's previous efforts, two, 'The Revellers' and 'The Babylonians,' were apparently youthful essays, and are both lost. The other, 'The Acharnians,' forms the first of the three Comedies dealing directly with the War and its disastrous effects and urging the conclusion of Peace; for this reason it is better ranged along with its sequels, the 'Peace' and the 'Lysistrata,' and considered in conjunction with them.

In many respects 'The Knights' may be reckoned the great Comedian's masterpiece, the direct personal attack on the then all-powerful Cleon, with its scathing satire and tremendous invective, being one of the most vigorous and startling things in literature. Already in 'The Acharnians' he had threatened to "cut up Cleon the Tanner into shoe-leather for the Knights," and he now proceeds to carry his menace into execution, "concentrating the whole force of his wit in the most unscrupulous and merciless fashion against his personal enemy." In the first-mentioned play Aristophanes had attacked and satirized the whole general policy of the democratic party — and incidentally Cleon, its leading spirit and mouthpiece since the death of Pericles; he had painted the miseries of war and invasion arising from this mistaken and mischievous line of action, as he regarded it, and had dwelt on the urgent necessity of peace in the interests of an exhausted country and ruined agriculture. Now he turns upon Cleon personally, and pays him back a hundredfold for the attacks the demagogue had made in the Public Assembly on the daring critic, and the abortive charge which the same unscrupulous enemy had brought against him in the Courts of having "slandered the city in the presence of foreigners." "In this bitterness of spirit the play stands in strong contrast with the good-humoured burlesque of 'The Acharnians' and the 'Peace,' or, indeed, with any other of the author's productions which has reached us."

The characters are five only. First and foremost comes Demos, 'The People,' typifying the Athenian democracy, a rich householder — a self-indulgent, superstitious, weak creature. He has had several overseers or factors in succession, to look after his estate and manage his slaves. The present one is known as 'the Paphlagonian,' or sometimes as 'the Tanner,' an unprincipled, lying, cheating, pilfering scoundrel, fawning and obsequious to his master, insolent towards his subordinates. Two of these are Nicias and Demosthenes.

Here we have real names. Nicias was High Admiral of the Athenian navy at the time, and Demosthenes one of his Vice-Admirals; both held still more important commands later in connection with the Sicilian Expedition of 415-413 B.C. Fear of consequences apparently prevented the poet from doing the same in the case of Cleon, who is, of course, intended under the names of 'the Paphlagonian' and 'the Tanner.' Indeed, so great was the terror inspired by the great man that no artist was found bold enough to risk his powerful vengeance by caricaturing his features, and no actor dared to represent him on the stage. Aristophanes is said to have played the part himself, with his face, in the absence of a mask, smeared with wine-lees, roughly mimicking the purple and bloated visage of the demagogue. The remaining character is 'the Sausage-seller,' who is egged on by Nicias and Demosthenes to oust 'the Paphlagonian' from Demos' favour by outvying him in his own arts of impudent flattery, noisy boasting and unscrupulous allurement. After a fierce and stubbornly contested trial of wits and interchange of 'Billingsgate,' 'the Sausage-seller' beats his rival at his own weapons and gains his object; he supplants the disgraced favourite, who is driven out of the house with ignominy.

The Comedy takes its title, as was often the case, from the Chorus, which is composed of Knights — the order of citizens next to the highest at Athens, and embodying many of the old aristocratic preferences and prejudices.

The drama was adjudged the first prize — the 'Satyrs' of Cratinus being placed second — by acclamation, as such a masterpiece of wit and intrepidity certainly deserved to be; but, as usual, the political result was nil. The piece was applauded in the most enthusiastic manner, the satire on the sovereign multitude was forgiven, and — Cleon remained in as much favour as ever.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DEMOSTHENES.
NICIAS.
AGORACRITUS, a Sausage-seller.
CLEON.
DEMOS, an old man, typifying the Athenian people.
CHORUS OF KNIGHTS.

SCENE: In front of Demos' house at Athens.

THE KNIGHTS

DEMOSTHENES. Oh! alas! alas! Oh! woe! oh! woe! Miserable Paphlagonian! may the gods destroy both him and his cursed advice! Since that evil day when this new slave entered the house he has never ceased belabouring us with blows.

NICIAS. May the plague seize him, the arch-fiend — him and his lying tales!

DEMOSTHENES. Hah! my poor fellow, what is your condition?

NICIAS. Very wretched, just like your own.

DEMOSTHENES. Then come, let us sing a duet of groans in the style of Olympus.

DEMOSTHENES AND NICIAS. Boo, hoo! boo, hoo! boo, hoo! boo, hoo! boo, hoo! boo, hoo!!

DEMOSTHENES. Bah! 'tis lost labour to weep! Enough of groaning! Let us consider how to save our pelts.

NICIAS. But how to do it! Can you suggest anything?

DEMOSTHENES. Nay! you begin. I cede you the honour.

NICIAS. By Apollo! no, not I. Come, have courage! Speak, and then I will say what I think.

DEMOSTHENES. "Ah! would you but tell me what I should tell you!"

NICIAS. I dare not. How could I express my thoughts with the pomp of Euripides?

DEMOSTHENES. Oh! prithee, spare me! Do not pelt me with those vegetables, but find some way of leaving our master.

NICIAS. Well, then! Say "Let-us-bolt," like this, in one breath.

DEMOSTHENES. I follow you— "Let-us-bolt."

NICIAS. Now after “Let-us-bolt” say “at-top-speed!”

DEMOSTHENES. “At-top-speed!”

NICIAS. Splendid! Just as if you were masturbating yourself; first slowly, “Let-us-bolt”; then quick and firmly, “at-top-speed!”

DEMOSTHENES. Let-us-bolt, let-us-bolt-at-top-speed!

NICIAS. Hah! does that not please you?

DEMOSTHENES. I’ faith, yes! yet I fear me your omen bodes no good to my hide.

NICIAS. How so?

DEMOSTHENES. Because hard rubbing abrades the skin when folk masturbate themselves.

NICIAS. The best thing we can do for the moment is to throw ourselves at the feet of the statue of some god.

DEMOSTHENES. Of which statue? Any statue? Do you then believe there are gods?

NICIAS. Certainly.

DEMOSTHENES. What proof have you?

NICIAS. The proof that they have taken a grudge against me. Is that not enough?

DEMOSTHENES. I’m convinced it is. But to pass on. Do you consent to my telling the spectators of our troubles?

NICIAS. ’Twould not be amiss, and we might ask them to show us by their manner, whether our facts and actions are to their liking.

DEMOSTHENES. I will begin then. We have a very brutal master, a perfect glutton for beans, and most bad-tempered; ’tis Demos of the Pnyx, an intolerable old man and half deaf. The beginning of last month he bought a slave, a

Paphlagonian tanner, an arrant rogue, the incarnation of calumny. This man of leather knows his old master thoroughly; he plays the fawning cur, flatters, cajoles; wheedles, and dupes him at will with little scraps of leavings, which he allows him to get. “Dear Demos,” he will say, “try a single case and you will have done enough; then take your bath, eat, swallow and devour; here are three obols.” Then the Paphlagonian filches from one of us what we have prepared and makes a present of it to our old man. T’other day I had just kneaded a Spartan cake at Pylos; the cunning rogue came behind my back, sneaked it and offered the cake, which was my invention, in his own name. He keeps us at a distance and suffers none but himself to wait upon the master; when Demos is dining, he keeps close to his side with a thong in his hand and puts the orators to flight. He keeps singing oracles to him, so that the old man now thinks of nothing but the Sibyl. Then, when he sees him thoroughly obfuscated, he uses all his cunning and piles up lies and calumnies against the household; then we are scourged and the Paphlagonian runs about among the slaves to demand contributions with threats and gathers ‘em in with both hands. He will say, “You see how I have had Hylas beaten! Either content me or die at once!” We are forced to give, for else the old man tramples on us and makes us spew forth all our body contains. There must be an end to it, friend. Let us see! what can be done? Who will get us out of this mess?

NICIAS. The best thing, chum, is our famous “Let-us-bolt!”

DEMOSTHENES. But none can escape the Paphlagonian, his eye is everywhere. And what a stride! He has one leg on Pylos and the other in the Assembly; his rump is exactly over the land of the Chaonians, his hands are with the Aetolians and his mind with the Clopidians.

NICIAS. ’Tis best then to die; but let us seek the most heroic death.

DEMOSTHENES. Let me bethink me, what is the most heroic?

NICIAS. Let us drink the blood of a bull; ’tis the death which
Themistocles chose.

DEMOSTHENES. No, not that, but a bumper of good unmixed wine in honour of the Good Genius; perchance we may stumble on a happy thought.

NICIAS. Look at him! “Unmixed wine!” Your mind is on drink intent? Can a man strike out a brilliant thought when drunk?

DEMOSTHENES. Without question. Go, ninny, blow yourself out with water; do you dare to accuse wine of clouding the reason? Quote me more marvellous effects than those of wine. Look! when a man drinks, he is rich, everything he touches succeeds, he gains lawsuits, is happy and helps his friends. Come, bring hither quick a flagon of wine, that I may soak my brain and get an ingenious idea.

NICIAS. Eh, my god! What can your drinking do to help us?

DEMOSTHENES. Much. But bring it to me, while I take my seat. Once drunk, I shall strew little ideas, little phrases, little reasonings everywhere.

NICIAS *(returning with a flagon)*. It is lucky I was not caught in the house stealing the wine.

DEMOSTHENES. Tell me, what is the Paphlagonian doing now?

NICIAS. The wretch has just gobbled up some confiscated cakes; he is drunk and lies at full-length a-snoring on his hides.

DEMOSTHENES. Very well, come along, pour me out wine and plenty of it.

NICIAS. Take it and offer a libation to your Good Genius; taste, taste the liquor of the genial soil of Pramnium.

DEMOSTHENES. Oh, Good Genius! 'Tis thy will, not mine.

NICIAS. Prithee, tell me, what is it?

DEMOSTHENES. Run indoors quick and steal the oracles of the Paphlagonian, while he is asleep.

NICIAS. Bless me! I fear this Good Genius will be but a very Bad Genius for me.

DEMOSTHENES. And set the flagon near me, that I may moisten my wit to invent some brilliant notion.

NICIAS *(enters the house and returns at once)*. How the Paphlagonian grunts and snores! I was able to seize the sacred oracle, which he was guarding with the

greatest care, without his seeing me.

DEMOSTHENES. Oh! clever fellow! Hand it here, that I may read. Come, pour me out some drink, bestir yourself! Let me see what there is in it. Oh! prophecy! Some drink! some drink! Quick!

NICIAS. Well! what says the oracle?

DEMOSTHENES. Pour again.

NICIAS. Is “pour again” in the oracle?

DEMOSTHENES. Oh, Bacis!

NICIAS. But what is in it?

DEMOSTHENES. Quick! some drink!

NICIAS. Bacis is very dry!

DEMOSTHENES. Oh! miserable Paphlagonian! This then is why you have so long taken such precautions; your horoscope gave you qualms of terror.

NICIAS. What does it say?

DEMOSTHENES. It says here how he must end.

NICIAS. And how?

DEMOSTHENES. How? the oracle announces clearly that a dealer in oakum must first govern the city.

NICIAS. First dealer. And after him, who?

DEMOSTHENES. After him, a sheep-dealer.

NICIAS. Two dealers, eh? And what is this one’s fate?

DEMOSTHENES. To reign until a greater scoundrel than he arises; then he perishes and in his place the leather-seller appears, the Paphlagonian robber, the bawler, who roars like a torrent.

NICIAS. And the leather-seller must destroy the sheep-seller?

DEMOSTHENES. Yes.

NICIAS. Oh! woe is me! Where can another seller be found, is there ever a one left?

DEMOSTHENES. There is yet one, who plies a firstrate trade.

NICIAS. Tell me, pray, what is that?

DEMOSTHENES. You really want to know?

NICIAS. Yes.

DEMOSTHENES. Well then! 'tis a sausage-seller who must overthrow him.

NICIAS. A sausage-seller! Ah! by Posidon! what a fine trade! But where can this man be found?

DEMOSTHENES. Let us seek him.

NICIAS. Lo! there he is, going towards the market-place; 'tis the gods, the gods who send him!

DEMOSTHENES. This way, this way, oh, lucky sausage-seller, come forward, dear friend, our saviour, the saviour of our city.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. What is it? Why do you call me?

DEMOSTHENES. Come here, come and learn about your good luck, you who are
Fortune's favourite!

NICIAS. Come! Relieve him of his basket-tray and tell him the oracle of the god; I will go and look after the Paphlagonian.

DEMOSTHENES. First put down all your gear, then worship the earth and the gods.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. 'Tis done. What is the matter?

DEMOSTHENES. Happiness, riches, power; to-day you have nothing, to-morrow you will have all, oh! chief of happy Athens.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Why not leave me to wash my tripe and to sell my sausages instead of making game of me?

DEMOSTHENES. Oh! the fool! Your tripe! Do you see these tiers of people?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Yes.

DEMOSTHENES. You shall be master to them all, governor of the market, of the harbours, of the Pnyx; you shall trample the Senate under foot, be able to cashier the generals, load them with fetters, throw them into gaol, and you will play the debauchee in the Prytaneum.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. What! I?

DEMOSTHENES. You, without a doubt. But you do not yet see all the glory awaiting you. Stand on your basket and look at all the islands that surround Athens.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I see them. What then?

DEMOSTHENES. Look at the storehouses and the shipping.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Yes, I am looking.

DEMOSTHENES. Exists there a mortal more blest than you? Furthermore, turn your right eye towards Caria and your left towards Chalcedon.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. 'Tis then a blessing to squint!

DEMOSTHENES. No, but 'tis you who are going to trade away all this.
According to the oracle you must become the greatest of men.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Just tell me how a sausage-seller can become a great man.

DEMOSTHENES. That is precisely why you will be great, because you are a sad rascal without shame, no better than a common market rogue.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I do not hold myself worthy of wielding power.

DEMOSTHENES. Oh! by the gods! Why do you not hold yourself worthy? Have you then such a good opinion of yourself? Come, are you of honest parentage?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. By the gods! No! of very bad indeed.

DEMOSTHENES. Spoilt child of fortune, everything fits together to ensure your greatness.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. But I have not had the least education. I can only read, and that very badly.

DEMOSTHENES. That is what may stand in your way, almost knowing how to read. The demagogues will neither have an educated nor an honest man; they require an ignoramus and a rogue. But do not, do not let go this gift, which the oracle promises.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. But what does the oracle say?

DEMOSTHENES. Faith! it is put together in very fine enigmatical style, as elegant as it is clear: “When the eagle-tanner with the hooked claws shall seize a stupid dragon, a blood-sucker, it will be an end to the hot Paphlagonian pickled garlic. The god grants great glory to the sausage-sellers unless they prefer to sell their wares.”

SAUSAGE-SELLER. In what way does this concern me? Pray instruct my ignorance.

DEMOSTHENES. The eagle-tanner is the Paphlagonian.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. What do the hooked claws mean?

DEMOSTHENES. It means to say, that he robs and pillages us with his claw-like hands.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And the dragon?

DEMOSTHENES. That is quite clear. The dragon is long and so also is the sausage; the sausage like the dragon is a drinker of blood. Therefore the oracle says, that the dragon will triumph over the eagle-tanner, if he does not let

himself be cajoled with words.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. The oracles of the gods summon me! Faith! I do not at all understand how I can be capable of governing the people.

DEMOSTHENES. Nothing simpler. Continue your trade. Mix and knead together all the state business as you do for your sausages. To win the people, always cook them some savoury that pleases them. Besides, you possess all the attributes of a demagogue; a screeching, horrible voice, a perverse, cross-grained nature and the language of the market-place. In you all is united which is needful for governing. The oracles are in your favour, even including that of Delphi. Come, take a chaplet, offer a libation to the god of Stupidity and take care to fight vigorously.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Who will be my ally? for the rich fear the Paphlagonian and the poor shudder at the sight of him.

DEMOSTHENES. You will have a thousand brave Knights, who detest him, on your side; also the honest citizens amongst the spectators, those who are men of brave hearts, and finally myself and the god. Fear not, you will not see his features, for none have dared to make a mask resembling him. But the public have wit enough to recognize him.

NICIAS. Oh! mercy! here is the Paphlagonian!

CLEON. By the twelve gods! Woe betide you, who have too long been conspiring against Demos. What means this Chalcidian cup? No doubt you are provoking the Chalcidians to revolt. You shall be killed, butchered, you brace of rogues.

DEMOSTHENES. What! are you for running away? Come, come, stand firm, bold Sausage-seller, do not betray us. To the rescue, oh! Knights. Now is the time. Simon, Panaetius, get you to the right wing; they are coming on; hold tight and return to the charge. I can see the dust of their horses' hoofs; they are galloping to our aid. Courage! Repel, attack them, put them to flight.

CHORUS. Strike, strike the villain, who has spread confusion amongst the ranks of the Knights, this public robber, this yawning gulf of plunder, this devouring Charybdis, this villain, this villain, this villain! I cannot say the word too often, for he *is* a villain a thousand times a day. Come, strike, drive, hurl him over and

crush him to pieces; hate him as we hate him; stun him with your blows and your shouts. And beware lest he escape you; he knows the way Eucrates took straight to a bran sack for concealment.

CLEON. Oh! veteran Heliasts, brotherhood of the three obols, whom I fostered by bawling at random, help me; I am being beaten to death by rebels.

CHORUS. And ’tis justice; you devour the public funds that all should share in; you treat the officers answerable for the revenue like the fruit of the fig tree, squeezing them to find which are still green or more or less ripe; and, when you find one simple and timid, you force him to come from the Chersonese, then you seize him by the middle, throttle him by the neck, while you twist his shoulder back; he falls and you devour him. Besides, you know very well how to select from among the citizens those who are as meek as lambs, rich, without guile and loathers of lawsuits.

CLEON. Eh! what! Knights, are you helping them? But, if I am beaten, ’tis in your cause, for I was going to propose to erect you a statue in the city in memory of your bravery.

CHORUS. Oh! the impostor! the dull varlet! See! he treats us like old dotards and crawls at our feet to deceive us; but the cunning wherein lies his power shall this time recoil on himself; he trips up himself by resorting to such artifices.

CLEON. Oh Citizens! oh people! see how these brutes are bursting my belly.

CHORUS. What shouts! but ’tis this very bawling that incessantly upsets the city!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I can shout too — and so loud that you will flee with fear.

CHORUS. If you shout louder than he does, I will strike up the triumphal hymn; if you surpass him in impudence, the cake is ours.

CLEON. I denounce this fellow; he has had tasty stews exported from
Athens for the Spartan fleet.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I denounce him, who runs into the Prytaneum with empty belly and comes out with it full.

DEMOSTHENES. And by Zeus! he carries off bread, meat, and fish, which is forbidden. Pericles himself never had this right.

CLEON. You are travelling the right road to get killed.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I'll bawl three times as loud as you.

CLEON. I will deafen you with my yells.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I you with my bellowing.

CLEON. I shall calumniate you, if you become a Strategus.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Dog, I will lay your back open with the lash.

CLEON. I will make you drop your arrogance.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I will baffle your machinations.

CLEON. Dare to look me in the face!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I too was brought up in the market-place.

CLEON. I will cut you to shreds if you whisper a word.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I will daub you with dung if you open your mouth.

CLEON. I own I am a thief; do you admit yourself another.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. By our Hermes of the market-place, if caught in the act, why, I perjure myself before those who saw me.

CLEON. These are my own special tricks. I will denounce you to the Prytanes as the owner of sacred tripe, that has not paid tithe.

CHORUS. Oh! you scoundrel! you impudent bawler! everything is filled with your daring, all Attica, the Assembly, the Treasury, the decrees, the tribunals. As a furious torrent you have overthrown our city; your outcries have deafened Athens and, posted upon a high rock, you have lain in wait for the tribute moneys as the fisherman does for the tunny-fish.

CLEON. I know your tricks; ’tis an old plot resoled.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. If you know naught of soling, I understand nothing of sausages; you, who cut bad leather on the slant to make it look stout and deceive the country yokels. They had not worn it a day before it had stretched some two spans.

DEMOSTHENES ’Tis the very trick he served me; both my neighbours and my friends laughed heartily at me, and before I reached Pergasae I was swimming in my shoes.

CHORUS. Have you not always shown that blatant impudence, which is the sole strength of our orators? You push it so far, that you, the head of the State, dare to milk the purses of the opulent aliens and, at sight of you, the son of Hippodamus melts into tears. But here is another man, who gives me pleasure, for he is a much greater rascal than you; he will overthrow you; ’tis easy to see, that he will beat you in roguery, in brazenness and in clever turns. Come, you, who have been brought up among the class which to-day gives us all our great men, show us that a liberal education is mere tomfoolery.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Just hear what sort of fellow that fine citizen is.

CLEON. Will you not let me speak?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Assuredly not, for I also am a sad rascal.

CHORUS. If he does not give in at that, tell him your parents were sad rascals too.

CLEON. Once more, will you not let me speak?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. No, by Zeus!

CLEON. Yes, by Zeus, but you shall!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. No, by Posidon! We will fight first to see who shall speak first.

CLEON. I will die sooner.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I will not let you….

CHORUS. Let him, in the name of the gods, let him die.

CLEON. What makes you so bold as to dare to speak to my face?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. ’Tis that I know both how to speak and how to cook.

CLEON. Hah! the fine speaker! Truly, if some business matter fell your way, you would know thoroughly well how to attack it, to carve it up alive! Shall I tell you what has happened to you? Like so many others, you have gained some petty lawsuit against some alien. Did you drink enough water to inspire you? Did you mutter over the thing sufficiently through the night, spout it along the street, recite it to all you met? Have you bored your friends enough with it? ’Tis then for this you deem yourself an orator. Ah! poor fool!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And what do you drink yourself then, to be able all alone by yourself to dumbfound and stupefy the city so with your clamour?

CLEON. Can you match me with a rival? Me! When I have devoured a good hot tunny-fish and drunk on top of it a great jar of unmixed wine, I hold up the Generals of Pylos to public scorn.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I, when I have bolted the tripe of an ox together with a sow’s belly and swallowed the broth as well, I am fit, though slobbering with grease, to bellow louder than all orators and to terrify Nicias.

CHORUS. I admire your language so much; the only thing I do not approve is that you swallow all the broth yourself.

CLEON. E’en though you gorged yourself on sea-dogs, you would not beat the Milesians.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Give me a bullock’s breast to devour, and I am a man to traffic in mines.

CLEON. I will rush into the Senate and set them all by the ears.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I will lug out your gut to stuff like a sausage.

CLEON. As for me, I will seize you by the rump and hurl you head foremost through the door.

CHORUS. In any case, by Posidon, ‘twill only be when you have thrown *me* there first.

CLEON. Beware of the carcan!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I denounce you for cowardice.

CLEON. I will tan your hide.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I will flay you and make a thief’s pouch with the skin.

CLEON. I will peg you out on the ground.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I will slice you into mince-meat.

CLEON. I will tear out your eyelashes.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I will slit your gullet.

DEMOSTHENES. We will set his mouth open with a wooden stick as the cooks do with pigs; we will tear out his tongue, and, looking down his gaping throat, will see whether his inside has any pimples.

CHORUS. Thus then at Athens we have something more fiery than fire, more impudent than impudence itself! ’Tis a grave matter; come, we will push and jostle him without mercy. There, you grip him tightly under the arms; if he gives way at the onset, you will find him nothing but a craven; I know my man.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. That he has been all his life and he has only made himself a name by reaping another’s harvest; and now he has tied up the ears he gathered over there, he lets them dry and seeks to sell them.

CLEON. I do not fear you as long as there is a Senate and a people which stands like a fool, gaping in the air.

CHORUS. What unparalleled impudence! ’Tis ever the same brazen front. If I don’t hate you, why, I’m ready to take the place of the one blanket Cratinus

wets; I'll offer to play a tragedy by Morsimus. Oh! you cheat! who turn all into money, who flutter from one extortion to another; may you disgorge as quickly as you have crammed yourself! Then only would I sing, "Let us drink, let us drink to this happy event!" Then even the son of Iulius, the old niggard, would empty his cup with transports of joy, crying, "Io, Paean! Io, Bacchus!"

CLEON. By Posidon! You! would you beat me in impudence! If you succeed, may I no longer have my share of the victims offered to Zeus on the city altar.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I, I swear by the blows that have so oft rained upon my shoulders since infancy, and by the knives that have cut me, that I will show more effrontery than you; as sure as I have rounded this fine stomach by feeding on the pieces of bread that had cleansed other folk's greasy fingers.

CLEON. On pieces of bread, like a dog! Ah! wretch! you have the nature of a dog and you dare to fight a cynecephalus?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I have many another trick in my sack, memories of my childhood's days. I used to linger around the cooks and say to them, "Look, friends, don't you see a swallow? 'tis the herald of springtime." And while they stood, their noses in the air, I made off with a piece of meat.

CHORUS. Oh! most clever man! How well thought out! You did as the eaters of artichokes, you gathered them before the return of the swallows.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. They could make nothing of it; or, if they suspected a trick, I hid the meat in my breeches and denied the thing by all the gods; so that an orator, seeing me at the game, cried, "This child will get on; he has the mettle that makes a statesman."

CHORUS. He argued rightly; to steal, perjure yourself and make a receiver of your rump are three essentials for climbing high.

CLEON. I will stop your insolence, or rather the insolence of both of you. I will throw myself upon you like a terrible hurricane ravaging both land and sea at the will of its fury.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Then I will gather up my sausages and entrust myself to the kindly waves of fortune so as to make you all the more enraged.

DEMOSTHENES. And I will watch in the bilges in case the boat should make water.

CLEON. No, by Demeter! I swear, ‘twill not be with impunity that you have thieved so many talents from the Athenians.

CHORUS *(to the Sausage-seller)*. Oh! oh! reef your sail a bit! Here is
Boreas blowing calumniously.

CLEON. I know that you got ten talents out of Potidaea.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Hold! I will give you one; but keep it dark!

CHORUS. Hah! that will please him mightily; now you can travel under full sail.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Yes, the wind has lost its violence.

CLEON. I will bring four suits against you, each of one hundred talents.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I twenty against you for shirking duty and more than a thousand for robbery.

CLEON. I maintain that your parents were guilty of sacrilege against the goddess.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I, that one of your grandfathers was a satellite….

CLEON. To whom? Explain!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. To Byrsina, the mother of Hippias.

CLEON. You are an impostor.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And you are a rogue.

CHORUS. Hit him hard.

CLEON. Oh, oh, dear! The conspirators are murdering me!

CHORUS. Strike, strike with all your might; bruise his belly, lashing him with

your guts and your tripe; punish him with both arms! Oh! vigorous assailant and intrepid heart! Have you not routed him totally in this duel of abuse? how shall I give tongue to my joy and sufficiently praise you?

CLEON. Ah! by Demeter! I was not ignorant of this plot against me; I knew it was forming, that the chariot of war was being put together.

CHORUS *(to Sausage-seller)*. Look out, look out! Come, outfence him with some wheelwright slang?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. His tricks at Argos do not escape me. Under pretence of forming an alliance with the Argives, he is hatching a plot with the Lacedaemonians there; and I know why the bellows are blowing and the metal that is on the anvil; 'tis the question of the prisoners.

CHORUS. Well done! Forge on, if he be a wheelwright.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And there are men at Sparta who are hammering the iron with you; but neither gold nor silver nor prayers nor anything else shall impede my denouncing your trickery to the Athenians.

CLEON. As for me, I hasten to the Senate to reveal your plotting, your nightly gatherings in the city, your trafficking with the Medes and with the Great King, and all you are foraging for in Boeotia.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. What price then is paid for forage by Boeotians?

CLEON. Oh! by Heracles! I will tan your hide.

CHORUS. Come, if you have both wit and heart, now is the time to show it, as on the day when you hid the meat in your breeches, as you say. Hasten to the Senate, for he will rush there like a tornado to calumniate us all and give vent to his fearful bellowings.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I am going, but first I must rid myself of my tripe and my knives; I will leave them here.

CHORUS. Stay! rub your neck with lard; in this way you will slip between the fingers of calumny.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Spoken like a finished master of fence.

CHORUS. Now, bolt down these cloves of garlic.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Pray, what for?

CHORUS. Well primed with garlic, you will have greater mettle for the fight. But hurry, hurry, bestir yourself!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. That's just what I am doing.

CHORUS. And, above all, bite your foe, rend him to atoms, tear off his comb and do not return until you have devoured his wattles. Go! make your attack with a light heart, avenge me and may Zeus guard you! I burn to see you return the victor and laden with chaplets of glory. And you, spectators, enlightened critics of all kinds of poetry, lend an ear to my anapaests.

CHORUS. Had one of the old authors asked to mount this stage to recite his verses, he would not have found it hard to persuade me. But our poet of to-day is likewise worthy of this favour; he shares our hatred, he dares to tell the truth, he boldly braves both waterspouts and hurricanes. Many among you, he tells us, have expressed wonder, that he has not long since had a piece presented in his own name, and have asked the reason why. This is what he bids us say in reply to your questions; 'tis not without grounds that he has courted the shade, for, in his opinion, nothing is more difficult than to cultivate the comic Muse; many court her, but very few secure her favours. Moreover, he knows that you are fickle by nature and betray your poets when they grow old. What fate befell Magnes, when his hair went white? Often enough has he triumphed over his rivals; he has sung in all keys, played the lyre and fluttered wings; he turned into a Lydian and even into a gnat, daubed himself with green to become a frog. All in vain! When young, you applauded him; in his old age you hooted and mocked him, because his genius for raillery had gone. Cratinus again was like a torrent of glory rushing across the plain, uprooting oak, plane tree and rivals and bearing them pell-mell in its wake. The only songs at the banquet were, 'Doro, shod with lying tales' and 'Adepts of the Lyric Muse'; so great was his renown. Look at him now! he drivels, his lyre has neither strings nor keys, his voice quivers, but you have no pity for him, and you let him wander about as he can, like Connas, his temples circled with a withered chaplet; the poor old fellow is dying of thirst; he who, in honour of his glorious past, should be in the Prytaneum drinking at

his ease, and instead of trudging the country should be sitting amongst the first row of the spectators, close to the statue of Dionysus and loaded with perfumes. Crates, again, have you done hounding him with your rage and your hisses? True, 'twas but meagre fare that his sterile Muse could offer you; a few ingenious fancies formed the sole ingredients, but nevertheless he knew how to stand firm and to recover from his falls. 'Tis such examples that frighten our poet; in addition, he would tell himself, that before being a pilot, he must first know how to row, then to keep watch at the prow, after that how to gauge the winds, and that only then would he be able to command his vessel. If then you approve this wise caution and his resolve that he would not bore you with foolish nonsense, raise loud waves of applause in his favour this day, so that, at this Lenaean feast, the breath of your favour may swell the sails of his trumphant galley and the poet may withdraw proud of his success, with head erect and his face beaming with delight.

Posidon, god of the racing steed, I salute you, you who delight in their neighing and in the resounding clatter of their brass-shod hoofs, god of the swift galleys, which, loaded with mercenaries, cleave the seas with their azure beaks, god of the equestrian contests, in which young rivals, eager for glory, ruin themselves for the sake of distinction with their chariots in the arena, come and direct our chorus; Posidon with the trident of gold, you, who reign over the dolphins, who are worshipped at Sunium and at Geraestus beloved of Phormio, and dear to the whole city above all the immortals, I salute you!

Let us sing the glory of our forefathers; ever victors, both on land and sea, they merit that Athens, rendered famous by these, her worthy sons, should write their deeds upon the sacred peplus. As soon as they saw the enemy, they at once sprang at him without ever counting his strength. Should one of them fall in the conflict, he would shake off the dust, deny his mishap and begin the struggle anew. Not one of these Generals of old time would have asked Cleaenetus to be fed at the cost of the state; but our present men refuse to fight, unless they get the honours of the Prytaneum and precedence in their seats. As for us, we place our valour gratuitously at the service of Athens and of her gods; our only hope is, that, should peace ever put a term to our toils, you will not grudge us our long, scented hair nor our delicate care for our toilet.

Oh! Pallas, guardian of Athens, you, who reign over the most pious city, the most powerful, the richest in warriors and in poets, hasten to my call, bringing in your train our faithful ally in all our expeditions and combats, Victory, who

smiles on our choruses and fights with us against our rivals. Oh! goddess! manifest yourself to our sight; this day more than ever we deserve that you should ensure our triumph.

We will sing likewise the exploits of our steeds! they are worthy of our praises; in what invasions, what fights have I not seen them helping us! But especially admirable were they, when they bravely leapt upon the galleys, taking nothing with them but a coarse wine, some cloves of garlic and onions; despite this, they nevertheless seized the sweeps just like men, curved their backs over the thwarts and shouted, "Hippopopoh! Give way! Come, all pull together! Come, come! How! Samphoras! Are you not rowing?" They rushed down upon the coast of Corinth, and the youngest hollowed out beds in the sand with their hoofs or went to fetch coverings; instead of luzern, they had no food but crabs, which they caught on the strand and even in the sea; so that Theorus causes a Corinthian crab to say, "'Tis a cruel fate, oh Posidon! neither my deep hiding-places, whether on land or at sea, can help me to escape the Knights."

Welcome, oh, dearest and bravest of men! How distracted I have been during your absence! But here you are back, safe and sound. Tell us about the fight you have had.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. The important thing is that I have beaten the Senate.

CHORUS. All glory to you! Let us burst into shouts of joy! You speak well, but your deeds are even better. Come, tell me everything in detail; what a long journey would I not be ready to take to hear your tale! Come, dear friend, speak with full confidence to your admirers.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. The story is worth hearing. Listen! From here I rushed straight to the Senate, right in the track of this man; he was already letting loose the storm, unchaining the lightning, crushing the Knights beneath huge mountains of calumnies heaped together and having all the air of truth; he called you conspirators and his lies caught root like weeds in every mind; dark were the looks on every side and brows were knitted. When I saw that the Senate listened to him favourably and was being tricked by his imposture, I said to myself, "Come, gods of rascals and braggarts, gods of all fools, toad-eaters and braggarts and thou, market-place, where I was bred from my earliest days, give me unbridled audacity, an untiring chatter and a shameless voice." No sooner had I ended this prayer than a lewd man broke wind on my right. "Hah! 'tis a good

omen," said I, and prostrated myself; then I burst open the door by a vigorous push with my back, and, opening my mouth to the utmost, shouted, "Senators, I wanted you to be the first to hear the good news; since the War broke out, I have never seen anchovies at a lower price!" All faces brightened at once and I was voted a chaplet for my good tidings; and I added, "With a couple of words I will reveal to you, how you can have quantities of anchovies for an obol; 'tis to seize on all the dishes the merchants have." With mouths gaping with admiration, they applauded me. However, the Paphlagonian winded the matter and, well knowing the sort of language which pleases the Senate best, said, "Friends, I am resolved to offer one hundred oxen to the goddess in recognition of this happy event." The Senate at once veered to his side. So when I saw myself defeated by this ox filth, I outbade the fellow, crying, "Two hundred!" And beyond this I moved, that a vow be made to Diana of a thousand goats if the next day anchovies should only be worth an obol a hundred. And the Senate looked towards me again. The other, stunned with the blow, grew delirious in his speech, and at last the Prytanes and the guards dragged him out. The Senators then stood talking noisily about the anchovies. Cleon, however, begged them to listen to the Lacedaemonian envoy, who had come to make proposals of peace; but all with one accord, cried, "'Tis certainly not the moment to think of peace now! If anchovies are so cheap, what need have we of peace? Let the war take its course!" And with loud shouts they demanded that the Prytanes should close the sitting and then leapt over the rails in all directions. As for me, I slipped away to buy all the coriander seed and leeks there were on the market and gave it to them gratis as seasoning for their anchovies. 'Twas marvellous! They loaded me with praises and caresses; thus I conquered the Senate with an obol's worth of leeks, and here I am.

CHORUS. Bravo! you are the spoilt child of Fortune. Ah! our knave has found his match in another, who has far better tricks in his sack, a thousand kinds of knaveries and of wily words. But the fight begins afresh; take care not to weaken; you know that I have long been your most faithful ally.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Ah! ah! here comes the Paphlagonian! One would say, 'twas a hurricane lashing the sea and rolling the waves before it in its fury. He looks as if he wanted to swallow me up alive! Ye gods! what an impudent knave!

CLEON. To my aid, my beloved lies! I am going to destroy you, or my name is lost.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Oh! how he diverts me with his threats! His bluster makes me laugh! And I dance the *mothon* for joy, and sing at the top of my voice, cuckoo!

CLEON. Ah! by Demeter! if I do not kill and devour you, may I die!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. If you do not devour me? and I, if I do not drink your blood to the last drop, and then burst with indigestion.

CLEON. I, I will strangle you, I swear it by the precedence which Pylos gained me.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. By the precedence! Ah! might I see you fall from your precedence into the hindmost seat!

CLEON. By heaven! I will put you to the torture.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. What a lively wit! Come, what's the best to give you to eat? What do you prefer? A purse?

CLEON. I will tear out your inside with my nails.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I will cut off your victuals at the Prytaneum.

CLEON. I will haul you before Demos, who will mete out justice to you.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I too will drag you before him and belch forth more calumnies than you.

CLEON. Why, poor fool, he does not believe you, whereas I play with him at will.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. So that Demos is your property, your contemptible creature.

CLEON. 'Tis because I know the dishes that please him.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And these are little mouthfuls, which you serve to him like a clever nurse. You chew the pieces and place some in small quantities in his mouth, while you swallow three parts yourself.

CLEON. Thanks to my skill, I know exactly how to enlarge or contract this gullet.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I can do as much with my rump.

CLEON. Hah! my friend, you tricked me at the Senate, but have a care! Let us go before Demos.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. That's easily done; come, let's along without delay.

CLEON. Oh, Demos! Come, I adjure you to help me, my father!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Come, oh, my dear little Demos; come and see how I am insulted.

DEMOS. What a hubbub! To the Devil with you, bawlers! alas! my olive branch, which they have torn down! Ah! 'tis you, Paphlagonian. And who, pray, has been maltreating you?

CLEON. You are the cause of this man and these young people having covered me with blows.

DEMOS. And why?

CLEON Because you love me passionately, Demos.

DEMOS. And you, who are you?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. His rival. For many a long year have I loved you, have I wished to do you honour, I and a crowd of other men of means. But this rascal here has prevented us. You resemble those young men who do not know where to choose their lovers; you repulse honest folk; to earn your favours, one has to be a lamp-seller, a cobbler, a tanner or a currier.

CLEON. I am the benefactor of the people.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. In what way, an it please you?

CLEON. In what way? I supplanted the Generals at Pylos, I hurried thither and I brought back the Laconian captives.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I, whilst simply loitering, cleared off with a pot from a shop, which another fellow had been boiling.

CLEON. Demos, convene the assembly at once to decide which of us two loves you best and most merits your favour.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Yes, yes, provided it be not at the Pnyx.

DEMOS. I could not sit elsewhere; 'tis at the Pnyx, that you must appear before me.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Ah! great gods! I am undone! At home this old fellow is the most sensible of men, but the instant he is seated on those cursed stone seats, he is there with mouth agape as if he were hanging up figs by their stems to dry.

CHORUS. Come, loose all sail. Be bold, skilful in attack and entangle him in arguments which admit of no reply. It is difficult to beat him, for he is full of craft and pulls himself out of the worst corners. Collect all your forces to come forth from this fight covered with glory, but take care! Let him not assume the attack, get ready your grapples and advance with your vessel to board him!

CLEON. Oh! guardian goddess of our city! oh! Athené! if it be true that next to Lysicles, Cynna and Salabaccha none have done so much good for the Athenian people as I, suffer me to continue to be fed at the Prytaneum without working; but if I hate you, if I am not ready to fight in your defence alone and against all, may I perish, be sawn to bits alive and my skin be cut up into thongs.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I, Demos, if it be not true, that I love and cherish you, may I be cooked in a stew; and if that is not saying enough, may I be grated on this table with some cheese and then hashed, may a hook be passed through my testicles and let me be dragged thus to the Ceramicus!

CLEON. Is it possible, Demos, to love you more than I do? And firstly, as long as you have governed with my consent, have I not filled your treasury, putting pressure on some, torturing others or begging of them, indifferent to the opinion of private individuals, and solely anxious to please you?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. There is nothing so wonderful in all that, Demos; I will do as much; I will thieve the bread of others to serve up to you. No, he has neither love for you nor kindly feeling; his only care is to warm himself with your wood,

and I will prove it. You, who, sword in hand, saved Attica from the Median yoke at Marathon; you, whose glorious triumphs we love to extol unceasingly, look, he cares little whether he sees you seated uncomfortably upon a stone; whereas I, I bring you this cushion, which I have sewn with my own hands. Rise and try this nice soft seat. Did you not put enough strain on your breeches at Salamis?

DEMOS. Who are you then? Can you be of the race of Harmodius? Upon my faith, 'tis nobly done and like a true friend of Demos.

CLEON. Petty flattery to prove him your goodwill!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. But you have caught him with even smaller baits!

CLEON. Never had Demos a defender or a friend more devoted than myself; on my head, on my life, I swear it!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. You pretend to love him and for eight years you have seen him housed in casks, in crevices and dovecots, where he is blinded with the smoke, and you lock him in without pity; Archeptolemus brought peace and you tore it to ribbons; the envoys who come to propose a truce you drive from the city with kicks in their backsides.

CLEON. This is that Demos may rule over all the Greeks; for the oracles predict that, if he is patient, he must one day sit as judge in Arcadia at five obols per day. Meanwhile, I will nourish him, look after him and, above all, I will ensure to him his three obols.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. No, little you care for his reigning in Arcadia, 'tis to pillage and impose on the allies at will that you reckon; you wish the War to conceal your rogueries as in a mist, that Demos may see nothing of them, and harassed by cares, may only depend on yourself for his bread. But if ever peace is restored to him, if ever he returns to his lands to comfort himself once more with good cakes, to greet his cherished olives, he will know the blessings you have kept him out of, even though paying him a salary; and, filled with hatred and rage, he will rise, burning with desire to vote against you. You know this only too well; 'tis for this you rock him to sleep with your lies.

CLEON. Is it not shameful, that you should dare thus to calumniate me before Demos, me, to whom Athens, I swear it by Demeter, already owes more than it ever did to Themistocles?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Oh! citizens of Argos, do you hear what he says? You dare to compare yourself to Themistocles, who found our city half empty and left it full to overflowing, who one day gave us the Piraeus for dinner, and added fresh fish to all our usual meals. You, on the contrary, you, who compare yourself with Themistocles, have only sought to reduce our city in size, to shut it within its walls, to chant oracles to us. And Themistocles goes into exile, while you gorge yourself on the most excellent fare.

CLEON. Oh! Demos! Am I compelled to hear myself thus abused, and merely because I love you?

DEMOS. Silence! stop your abuse! All too long have I been your tool.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Ah! my dear little Demos, he is a rogue, who has played you many a scurvy trick; when your back is turned, he taps at the root the lawsuits initiated by the peculators, swallows the proceeds wholesale and helps himself with both hands from the public funds.

CLEON. Tremble, knave; I will convict you of having stolen thirty thousand drachmae.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. For a rascal of your kidney, you shout rarely! Well! I am ready to die if I do not prove that you have accepted more than forty minae from the Mitylenaeans.

CHORUS. This indeed may be termed talking. Oh, benefactor of the human race, proceed and you will be the most illustrious of the Greeks. You alone shall have sway in Athens, the allies will obey you, and, trident in hand, you will go about shaking and overturning everything to enrich yourself. But, stick to your man, let him not go; with lungs like yours you will soon have him finished.

CLEON. No, my brave friends, no, you are running too fast; I have done a sufficiently brilliant deed to shut the mouth of all enemies, so long as one of the bucklers of Pylos remains.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Of the bucklers! Hold! I stop you there and I hold you fast. For if it be true, that you love the people, you would not allow these to be hung up with their rings; but ’tis with an intent you have done this. Demos, take knowledge of his guilty purpose; in this way you no longer can punish him at your pleasure. Note the swarm of young tanners, who really surround him, and

close to them the sellers of honey and cheese; all these are at one with him. Very well! you have but to frown, to speak of ostracism and they will rush at night to these bucklers, take them down and seize our granaries.

DEMOS. Great gods! what! the bucklers retain their rings! Scoundrel! ah! too long have you had me for your tool, cheated and played with me!

CLEON. But, dear sir, never you believe all he tells you. Oh! never will you find a more devoted friend than me; unaided, I have known how to put down the conspiracies; nothing that is a-hatching in the city escapes me, and I hasten to proclaim it loudly.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. You are like the fishers for eels; in still waters they catch nothing, but if they thoroughly stir up the slime, their fishing is good; in the same way 'tis only in troublous times that you line your pockets. But come, tell me, you, who sell so many skins, have you ever made him a present of a pair of soles for his slippers? and you pretend to love him!

DEMOS. No, he has never given me any.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. That alone shows up the man; but I, I have bought you this pair of shoes; accept them.

DEMOS. None ever, to my knowledge, has merited so much from the people; you are the most zealous of all men for your country and for my toes.

CLEON. Can a wretched pair of slippers make you forget all that you owe me? Is it not I who curbed Gryttus, the filthiest of the lewd, by depriving him of his citizen rights?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Ah! noble inspector of back passages, let me congratulate you. Moreover, if you set yourself against this form of lewdness, this pederasty, 'twas for sheer jealousy, knowing it to be the school for orators. But you see this poor Demos without a cloak and that at his age too! so little do you care for him, that in mid-winter you have not given him a garment with sleeves. Here, Demos, here is one, take it!

DEMOS. This even Themistocles never thought of; the Piraeus was no doubt a happy idea, but meseems this tunic is quite as fine an invention.

CLEON. Must you have recourse to such jackanapes' tricks to supplant me?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. No, 'tis your own tricks that I am borrowing, just as a guest, driven by urgent need, seizes some other man's shoes.

CLEON. Oh! you shall not outdo me in flattery! I am going to hand Demos this garment; all that remains to you, you rogue, is to go and hang yourself.

DEMOS. Faugh! may the plague seize you! You stink of leather horribly.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Why, 'tis to smother you that he has thrown this cloak around you on top of the other; and it is not the first plot he has planned against you. Do you remember the time when silphium was so cheap?

DEMOS. Aye, to be sure I do!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Very well! it was Cleon who had caused the price to fall so low so that all could eat it and the jurymen in the Courts were almost poisoned with farting in each others' faces.

DEMOS. Hah! why, indeed, a scavenger told me the same thing.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Were you not yourself in those days quite red in the gills with farting?

DEMOS. Why, 'twas a trick worthy of Pyrrandrus!

CLEON. With what other idle trash will you seek to ruin me, you wretch!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Oh! I shall be more brazen than you, for 'tis the goddess who has commanded me.

CLEON. No, on my honour, you will not! Here, Demos, feast on this dish; it is your salary as a dicast, which you gain through me for doing naught.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Hold! here is a little box of ointment to rub into the sores on your legs.

CLEON. I will pluck out your white hairs and make you young again.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Take this hare's scut to wipe the rheum from your eyes.

CLEON. When you wipe your nose, clean your fingers on my head.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. No, on mine.

CLEON. On mine. *(To the Sausage-seller.)* I will have you made a trierarch and you will get ruined through it; I will arrange that you are given an old vessel with rotten sails, which you will have to repair constantly and at great cost.

CHORUS. Our man is on the boil; enough, enough, he is boiling over; remove some of the embers from under him and skim off his threats.

CLEON. I will punish your self-importance; I will crush you with imposts;
I will have you inscribed on the list of the rich.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. For me no threats — only one simple wish. That you may be having some cuttle-fish fried on the stove just as you are going to set forth to plead the cause of the Milesians, which, if you gain, means a talent in your pocket; that you hurry over devouring the fish to rush off to the Assembly; suddenly you are called and run off with your mouth full so as not to lose the talent and choke yourself. There! that is my wish.

CHORUS. Splendid! by Zeus, Apollo and Demeter!

DEMOS. Faith! here is an excellent citizen indeed, such as has not been seen for a long time. 'Tis truly a man of the lowest scum! As for you, Paphlagonian, who pretend to love me, you only feed me on garlic. Return me my ring, for you cease to be my steward.

CLEON. Here it is, but be assured, that if you bereave me of my power, my successor will be worse than I am.

DEMOS. This cannot be my ring; I see another device, unless I am going purblind.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. What was your device?

DEMOS. A fig-leaf, stuffed with bullock's fat.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. No, that is not it.

DEMOS. What is it then?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. ’Tis a gull with beak wide open, haranguing from the top of a stone.

DEMOS. Ah! great gods!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. What is the matter?

DEMOS. Away! away out of my sight! ’Tis not my ring he had, ’twas that of Cleonymus. *(To the Sausage-seller.)* Hold, I give you this one; you shall be my steward.

CLEON. Master, I adjure you, decide nothing till you have heard my oracles.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And mine.

CLEON. If you believe him, you will have to suck his tool for him.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. If you listen to him, you’ll have to let him skin your penis to the very stump.

CLEON. My oracles say that you are to reign over the whole earth, crowned with chaplets.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And mine say that, clothed in an embroidered purple robe, you shall pursue Smicythes and her spouse, standing in a chariot of gold and with a crown on your head.

DEMOS. Go, fetch me your oracles, that the Paphlagonian may hear them.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Willingly.

DEMOS. And you yours.

CLEON. I run.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I run too; nothing could suit me better!

CHORUS. Oh! happy day for us and for our children, if Cleon perish. Yet just now I heard some old cross-grained pleaders on the market-place who hold not

this opinion discoursing together. Said they, “If Cleon had not had the power we should have lacked two most useful tools, the pestle and the soup-ladle.” You also know what a pig’s education he has had; his school-fellows can recall that he only liked the Dorian style and would study no other; his music-master in displeasure sent him away, saying: “This youth in matters of harmony, will only learn the Dorian style because ’tis akin to bribery.”

CLEON. There, behold and look at this heap; and yet I do not bring all.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Ugh! I pant and puff under the weight and yet I do not bring all.

DEMOS. What are these?

CLEON. Oracles.

DEMOS. All these?

CLEON. Does that astonish you? Why, I have another whole boxful of them.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I the whole of my attics and two rooms besides.

DEMOS. Come, let us see, whose are these oracles?

CLEON. Mine are those of Bacis.

DEMOS *(to the Sausage-seller)*. And whose are yours?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Glanis’s, the elder brother of Bacis.

DEMOS. And of what do they speak?

CLEON. Of Athens, of Pylos, of you, of me, of all.

DEMOS. And yours?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Of Athens, of lentils, of Lacedaemonians, of fresh mackerel, of scoundrelly flour-sellers, of you, of me. Ah! ha! now let him gnaw his own penis with chagrin!

DEMOS. Come, read them out to me and especially that one I like so much,

which says that I shall become an eagle and soar among the clouds.

CLEON. Then listen and be attentive! “Son of Erectheus, understand the meaning of the words, which the sacred tripods set resounding in the sanctuary of Apollo. Preserve the sacred dog with the jagged teeth, that barks and howls in your defence; he will ensure you a salary and, if he fails, will perish as the victim of the swarms of jays that hunt him down with their screams.”

DEMOS. By Demeter! I do not understand a word of it. What connection is there between Erectheus, the jays and the dog?

CLEON. ’Tis I who am the dog, since I bark in your defence. Well! Phoebus commands you to keep and cherish your dog.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. ’Tis not so spoken by the god; this dog seems to me to gnaw at the oracles as others gnaw at doorposts. Here is exactly what Apollo says of the dog.

DEMOS. Let us hear, but I must first pick up a stone; an oracle which speaks of a dog might bite me.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. “Son of Erectheus, beware of this Cerberus that enslaves freemen; he fawns upon you with his tail, when you are dining, but he is lying in wait to devour your dishes, should you turn your head an instant; at night he sneaks into the kitchen and, true dog that he is, licks up with one lap of his tongue both your dishes and … the islands.”

DEMOS. Faith, Glanis, you speak better than your brother.

CLEON. Condescend again to hear me and then judge: “A woman in sacred Athens will be delivered of a lion, who shall fight for the people against clouds of gnats with the same ferocity as if he were defending his whelps; care ye for him, erect wooden walls around him and towers of brass.” Do you understand that?

DEMOS. Not the least bit in the world.

CLEON. The god tells you here to look after me, for, ’tis I who am your lion.

DEMOS. How! You have become a lion and I never knew a thing about it?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. There is only one thing which he purposely keeps from you; he does not say what this wall of wood and brass is in which Apollo warns you to keep and guard him.

DEMOS. What does the god mean, then?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. He advises you to fit him into a five-holed wooden collar.

DEMOS. Hah! I think that oracle is about to be fulfilled.

CLEON. Do not believe it; these are but jealous crows, that caw against me; but never cease to cherish your good hawk; never forget that he brought you those Lacedaemonian fish, loaded with chains.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Ah! if the Paphlagonian ran any risk that day, 'twas because he was drunk. Oh, too credulous son of Cecrops, do you accept that as a glorious exploit? A woman would carry a heavy burden if only a man had put it on her shoulders. But to fight! Go to! he would shit himself, if ever it came to a tussle.

CLEON. Note this Pylos in front of Pylos, of which the oracle speaks,
"Pylos is before Pylos."

DEMOS. How "in front of Pylos"? What does he mean by that?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. He says he will seize upon your bath-tubs.

DEMOS. Then I shall not bathe to-day.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. No, as he has stolen our baths. But here is an oracle about the fleet, to which I beg your best attention.

DEMOS. Read on! I am listening; let us first see how we are to pay our sailors.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. "Son of Aegeus, beware of the tricks of the dog-fox, he bites from the rear and rushes off at full speed; he is nothing but cunning and perfidy." Do you know what the oracle intends to say?

DEMOS. The dog-fox is Philostratus.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. No, no, ’tis Cleon; he is incessantly asking you for light vessels to go and collect the tributes, and Apollo advises you not to grant them.

DEMOS. What connection is there between a galley and a dog-fox?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. What connection? Why, ’tis quite plain — a galley travels as fast as a dog.

DEMOS. Why, then, does the oracle not say dog instead of dog-fox?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Because he compares the soldiers to young foxes, who, like them, eat the grapes in the fields.

DEMOS. Good! Well then! how am I to pay the wages of my young foxes?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I will undertake that, and in three days too! But listen to this further oracle, by which Apollo puts you on your guard against the snares of the greedy fist.

DEMOS. Of what greedy fist?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. The god in this oracle very clearly points to the hand of Cleon, who incessantly holds his out, saying, “Fill it.”

CLEON. ’Tis false! Phoebus means the hand of Diopithes. But here I have a winged oracle, which promises you shall become an eagle and rule over all the earth.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I have one, which says that you shall be King of the Earth and of the Sea, and that you shall administer justice in Ecbatana, eating fine rich stews the while.

CLEON. I have seen Athené in a dream, pouring out full vials of riches and health over the people.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I too have seen the goddess, descending from the Acropolis with an owl perched upon her helmet; on your head she was pouring out ambrosia, on that of Cleon garlic pickle.

DEMOS. Truly Glanis is the wisest of men. I shall yield myself to you; guide me

in my old age and educate me anew.

CLEON. Ah! I adjure you! not yet; wait a little; I will promise to distribute barley every day.

DEMOS. Ah! I will not hear another word about barley; you have cheated me too often already, both you and Theophanes.

CLEON. Well then! you shall have flour-cakes all piping hot.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I will give you cakes too, and nice cooked fish; you will only have to eat.

DEMOS. Very well, mind you keep your promises. To whichever of you twain shall treat me best I hand over the reins of state.

CLEON. I will be first.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. No, no, *I* will.

CHORUS. Demos, you are our all-powerful sovereign lord; all tremble before you, yet you are led by the nose. You love to be flattered and fooled; you listen to the orators with gaping mouth and your mind is led astray.

DEMOS. 'Tis rather you who have no brains, if you think me so foolish as all that; it is with a purpose that I play this idiot's role, for I love to drink the lifelong day, and so it pleases me to keep a thief for my minister. When he has thoroughly gorged himself, then I overthrow and crush him.

CHORUS. What profound wisdom! If it be really so, why! all is for the best. Your ministers, then, are your victims, whom you nourish and feed up expressly in the Pnyx, so that, the day your dinner is ready, you may immolate the fattest and eat him.

DEMOS. Look, see how I play with them, while all the time they think themselves such adepts at cheating me. I have my eye on them when they thieve, but I do not appear to be seeing them; then I thrust a judgment down their throat as it were a feather, and force them to vomit up all they have robbed from me.

CLEON. Oh! the rascal!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Oh! the scoundrel!

CLEON. Demos, all is ready these three hours; I await your orders and I burn with desire to load you with benefits.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I ten, twelve, a thousand hours, a long, long while, an infinitely long while.

DEMOS. As for me, 'tis thirty thousand hours that I have been impatient; very long, infinitely long that I have cursed you.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Do you know what you had best do?

DEMOS. If I do not, tell me.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Declare the lists open and we will contend abreast to determine who shall treat you the best.

DEMOS. Splendid! Draw back in line!

CLEON. I am ready.

DEMOS. Off you go!

SAUSAGE-SELLER *(to Cleon)*. I shall not let you get to the tape.

DEMOS. What fervent lovers! If I am not to-day the happiest of men, 'tis because I shall be the most disgusted.

CLEON. Look! 'tis I who am the first to bring you a seat.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And I a table.

CLEON. Hold, here is a cake kneaded of Pylos barley.

SAUSAGE — SELLER. Here are crusts, which the ivory hand of the goddess has hallowed.

DEMOS. Oh! Mighty Athené! How large are your fingers!

CLEON. This is pea-soup, as exquisite as it is fine; 'tis Pallas the victorious

goddess at Pylos who crushed the peas herself.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Oh, Demos! the goddess watches over you; she is stretching forth over your head … a stew-pan full of broth.

DEMOS. And should we still be dwelling in this city without this protecting stew-pan?

CLEON. Here are some fish, given to you by her who is the terror of our foes.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. The daughter of the mightiest of the gods sends you this meat cooked in its own gravy, along with this dish of tripe and some paunch.

DEMOS. ’Tis to thank me for the Peplos I offered to her; ’tis well.

CLEON. The goddess with the terrible plume invites you to eat this long cake; you will row the harder on it.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Take this also.

DEMOS. And what shall I do with this tripe?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. She sends it you to belly out your galleys, for she is always showing her kindly anxiety for our fleet. Now drink this beverage composed of three parts of water to two of wine.

DEMOS. Ah! what delicious wine, and how well it stands the water.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. ’Twas the goddess who came from the head of Zeus that mixed this liquor with her own hands.

CLEON. Hold, here is a piece of good rich cake.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. But I offer you an entire cake.

CLEON. But you cannot offer him stewed hare as I do.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Ah! great gods! stewed hare! where shall I find it? Oh! brain of mine, devise some trick!

CLEON. Do you see this, poor fellow?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. A fig for that! Here are folk coming to seek me.

CLEON. Who are they?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Envoys, bearing sacks bulging with money.

CLEON. *(Hearing money mentioned Clean turns his head, and Agoracritus seizes the opportunity to snatch away the stewed hare.)* Where, where, I say?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Bah! What's that to you? Will you not even now let the strangers alone? Demos, do you see this stewed hare which I bring you?

CLEON. Ah! rascal! you have shamelessly robbed me.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. You have robbed too, you robbed the Laconians at Pylos.

DEMOS. An you pity me, tell me, how did you get the idea to filch it from him?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. The idea comes from the goddess; the theft is all my own.

CLEON. And I had taken such trouble to catch this hare.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. But 'twas I who had it cooked.

DEMOS *(to Cleon)*. Get you gone! My thanks are only for him who served it.

CLEON. Ah! wretch! have you beaten me in impudence!

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Well then, Demos, say now, who has treated you best, you and your stomach? Decide!

DEMOS. How shall I act here so that the spectators shall approve my judgment?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I will tell you. Without saying anything, go and rummage through my basket, and then through the Paphlagonian's, and see what is in them; that's the best way to judge.

DEMOS. Let us see then, what is there in yours?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Why, 'tis empty, dear little father; I have brought everything to you.

DEMOS. This is a basket devoted to the people.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Now hunt through the Paphlagonian's. Well?

DEMOS. Oh! what a lot of good things! Why! 'tis quite full! Oh! what a huge great part of this cake he kept for himself! He had only cut off the least little tiny piece for me.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. But this is what he has always done. Of everything he took, he only gave you the crumbs, and kept the bulk.

DEMOS. Oh! rascal! was this the way you robbed me? And I was loading you with chaplets and gifts!

CLEON. 'Twas for the public weal I robbed.

DEMOS *(to Cleon)*. Give me back that crown; I will give it to him.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Return it quick, quick, you gallows-bird.

CLEON. No, for the Pythian oracle has revealed to me the name of him who shall overthrow me.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. And that name was mine, nothing can be clearer.

CLEON. Reply and I shall soon see whether you are indeed the man whom the god intended. Firstly, what school did you attend when a child?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. 'Twas in the kitchens I was taught with cuffs and blows.

CLEON. What's that you say? Ah! this is truly what the oracle said. And what did you learn from the master of exercises?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I learnt to take a false oath without a smile, when I had stolen something.

CLEON. Oh! Phoebus Apollo, god of Lycia! I am undone! And when you had become a man, what trade did you follow?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. I sold sausages and did a bit of fornication.

CLEON. Oh! my god! I am a lost man! Ah! still one slender hope remains. Tell me, was it on the market-place or near the gates that you sold your sausages?

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Near the gates, in the market for salted goods.

CLEON Alas! I see the prophecy of the god is verily come true. Alas! roll me home. I am a miserable, ruined man. Farewell, my chaplet! 'Tis death to me to part with you. So you are to belong to another; 'tis certain he cannot be a greater thief, but perhaps he may be a luckier one.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. Oh! Zeus, the protector of Greece! 'tis to you I owe this victory!

DEMOSTHENES. Hail! illustrious conqueror, but forget not, that if you have become a great man, 'tis thanks to me; I ask but a little thing; appoint me secretary of the law-court in the room of Phanus.

DEMOS *(to the Sausage-seller)*. But what is your name then? Tell me.

SAUSAGE-SELLER. My name is Agoracritus, because I have always lived on the market-place in the midst of lawsuits.

DEMOS. Well then, Agoracritus, I stand by you; as for the Paphlagonian, I hand him over to your mercy.

AGORACRITUS. Demos, I will care for you to the best of my power, and all shall admit that no citizen is more devoted than I to this city of simpletons.

CHORUS. What fitter theme for our Muse, at the close as at the beginning of his work, than this, to sing the hero who drives his swift steeds down the arena? Why afflict Lysistratus with our satires on his poverty, and Thumantis, who has not so much as a lodging? He is dying of hunger and can be seen at Delphi, his face bathed in tears, clinging to your quiver, oh, Apollo! and supplicating you to take him out of his misery.

An insult directed at the wicked is not to be censured; on the contrary, the honest man, if he has sense, can only applaud. Him, whom I wish to brand with infamy, is little known himself; 'tis the brother of Arignotus. I regret to quote this name which is so dear to me, but whoever can distinguish black from white, or the Orthian mode of music from others, knows the virtues of Arignotus, whom his

brother, Ariphrades, in no way resembles. He gloats in vice, is not merely a dissolute man and utterly debauched — but he has actually invented a new form of vice; for he pollutes his tongue with abominable pleasures in brothels licking up that nauseous moisture and befouling his beard as he tickles the lips of lewd women's private parts. Whoever is not horrified at such a monster shall never drink from the same cup with me.

At times a thought weighs on me at night; I wonder whence comes this fearful voracity of Cleonymus. 'Tis said, that when dining with a rich host, he springs at the dishes with the gluttony of a wild beast and never leaves the bread-bin until his host seizes him round the knees, exclaiming, "Go, go, good gentleman, in mercy go, and spare my poor table!"

'Tis said that the triremes assembled in council and that the oldest spoke in these terms, "Are you ignorant, my sisters, of what is plotting in Athens? They say, that a certain Hyperbolus, a bad citizen and an infamous scoundrel, asks for a hundred of us to take them to sea against Chalcedon." All were indignant, and one of them, as yet a virgin, cried, "May god forbid that I should ever obey him! I would prefer to grow old in the harbour and be gnawed by worms. No! by the gods I swear it, Nauphanté, daughter of Nauson, shall never bend to his law; 'tis as true as I am made of wood and pitch. If the Athenians vote for the proposal of Hyperbolus, let them! we will hoist full sail and seek refuge by the temple of Theseus or the shrine of the Euminides. No! he shall not command us! No! he shall not play with the city to this extent! Let him sail by himself for Tartarus, if such please him, launching the boats in which he used to sell his lamps."

AGORACRITUS. Maintain a holy silence! Keep your mouths from utterance! call no more witnesses; close these tribunals, which are the delight of this city, and gather at the theatre to chant the Paean of thanksgiving to the gods for a fresh favour.

CHORUS. Oh! torch of sacred Athens, saviour of the Islands, what good tidings are we to celebrate by letting the blood of the victims flow in our market-places?

AGORACRITUS. I have freshened Demos up somewhat on the stove and have turned his ugliness into beauty.

CHORUS. I admire your inventive genius; but, where is he?

AGORACRITUS. He is living in ancient Athens, the city of the garlands of

violets.

CHORUS. How I should like to see him! What is his dress like, what his manner?

AGORACRITUS. He has once more become as he was in the days when he lived with Aristides and Miltiades. But you will judge for yourselves, for I hear the vestibule doors opening. Hail with your shouts of gladness the Athens of old, which now doth reappear to your gaze, admirable, worthy of the songs of the poets and the home of the illustrious Demos.

CHORUS. Oh! noble, brilliant Athens, whose brow is wreathed with violets, show us the sovereign master of this land and of all Greece.

AGORACRITUS. Lo! here he is coming with his hair held in place with a golden band and in all the glory of his old-world dress; perfumed with myrrh, he spreads around him not the odour of lawsuits, but of peace.

CHORUS. Hail! King of Greece, we congratulate you upon the happiness you enjoy; it is worthy of this city, worthy of the glory of Marathon.

DEMOS. Come, Agoracritus, come, my best friend; see the service you have done me by freshening me up on your stove.

AGORACRITUS. Ah! if you but remembered what you were formerly and what you did, you would for a certainty believe me to be a god.

DEMOS. But what did I? and how was I then?

AGORACRITUS. Firstly, so soon as ever an orator declared in the assembly "Demos, I love you ardently; 'tis I alone, who dream of you and watch over your interests"; at such an exordium you would look like a cock flapping his wings or a bull tossing his horns.

DEMOS. What, I?

AGORACRITUS. Then, after he had fooled you to the hilt, he would go.

DEMOS. What! they would treat me so, and I never saw it!

AGORACRITUS. You knew only how to open and close your ears like a sunshade.

DEMOS. Was I then so stupid and such a dotard?

AGORACRITUS. Worse than that; if one of two orators proposed to equip a fleet for war and the other suggested the use of the same sum for paying out to the citizens, 'twas the latter who always carried the day. Well! you droop your head! you turn away your face?

DEMOS. I redden at my past errors.

AGORACRITUS. Think no more of them; 'tis not you who are to blame, but those who cheated you in this sorry fashion. But, come, if some impudent lawyer dared to say, "Dicasts, you shall have no wheat unless you convict this accused man!" what would you do? Tell me.

DEMOS. I would have him removed from the bar, I would bind Hyperbolus about his neck like a stone and would fling him into the Barathrum.

AGORACRITUS. Well spoken! but what other measures do you wish to take?

DEMOS. First, as soon as ever a fleet returns to the harbour, I shall pay up the rowers in full.

AGORACRITUS. That will soothe many a worn and chafed bottom.

DEMOS. Further, the hoplite enrolled for military service shall not get transferred to another service through favour, but shall stick to that given him at the outset.

AGORACRITUS. This will strike the buckler of Cleonymus full in the centre.

DEMOS. None shall ascend the rostrum, unless their chins are bearded.

AGORACRITUS. What then will become of Clisthenes and of Strato?

DEMOS. I wish only to refer to those youths, who loll about the perfume shops, babbling at random, "What a clever fellow is Pheax! How cleverly he escaped death! how concise and convincing is his style! what phrases! how clear and to

the point! how well he knows how to quell an interruption!”

AGORACRITUS. I thought you were the lover of those pathic minions.

DEMOS. The gods forefend it! and I will force all such fellows to go a-hunting instead of proposing decrees.

AGORACRITUS. In that case, accept this folding-stool, and to carry it this well-grown, big-testicled slave lad. Besides, you may put him to any other purpose you please.

DEMOS. Oh! I am happy indeed to find myself as I was of old!

AGORACRITUS. Aye, you deem yourself happy, when I shall have handed you the truces of thirty years. Truces! step forward!

DEMOS. Great gods! how charming they are! Can I do with them as I wish? where did you discover them, pray?

AGORACRITUS. ’Twas that Paphlagonian who kept them locked up in his house, so that you might not enjoy them. As for myself, I give them to you; take them with you into the country.

DEMOS. And what punishment will you inflict upon this Paphlagonian, the cause of all my troubles?

AGORACRITUS. ‘Twill not be over-terrible. I condemn him to follow my old trade; posted near the gates, he must sell sausages of asses’ and dogs’-meat; perpetually drunk, he will exchange foul language with prostitutes and will drink nothing but the dirty water from the baths.

DEMOS. Well conceived! he is indeed fit to wrangle with harlots and bathmen; as for you, in return for so many blessings, I invite you to take the place at the Prytaneum which this rogue once occupied. Put on this frog-green mantle and follow me. As for the other, let ‘em take him away; let him go sell his sausages in full view of the foreigners, whom he used formerly so wantonly to insult.

THE CLOUDS

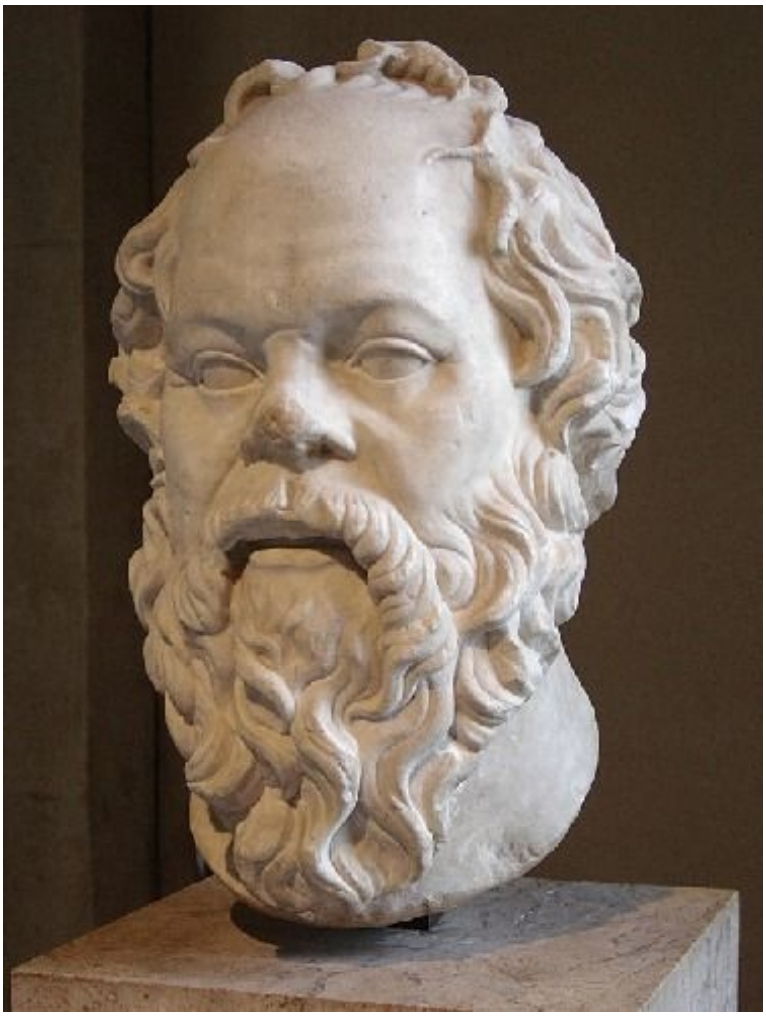
Anonymous translation for the Athenian Society, London, 1912

Originally produced at the City Dionysia in 423 BC, this comedy was not well received, coming last of the three plays competing at the festival that year. The play has gained notoriety for its satirical caricature and victimisation of the philosopher Socrates and has since been seen as a factor contributing to the philosopher's trial and execution.

The Clouds represents a departure from the political themes concerning the Peloponnesian War in Aristophanes' early plays. At the time of composition, the Spartans had recently stopped their annual invasions of Attica after the Athenians had taken Spartan hostages in the Battle of Sphacteria in 425 BC and both sides were enjoying a truce. Thus the original production of *The Clouds* in 423 BC came at a time when Athens was looking forward to a period of peace. Having already successfully lampooned Cleon, the populist leader of the pro-war faction in Athens, in his previous play *The Knights* in 424 BC, Aristophanes now turned his attention to satirising the philosopher Socrates in *The Clouds*. Socrates and his like-minded friends represented a new age of thought, challenging the men and women of Athens to question the world around him and the system of society they lived in, but many Athenians feared the ideas and changes that this new type of intellectual thinking might bring. Socrates is presented in *The Clouds* as a petty thief, a fraud and a sophist with a specious interest in physical speculations. However, it is still possible to recognise in him the distinctive individual defined in Plato's dialogues. The practice of ascetism, disciplined, introverted thinking and conversational dialectic appear to be caricatures of Socratic behaviours later described more sympathetically by Plato. The Aristophanic Socrates is much more interested in physical speculations than is Plato's Socrates, yet it is possible that the real Socrates did take a strong interest in such speculations during his development as a philosopher.

The play introduces the concerned Athenian father Strepsiades, who is afraid that his son Pheidippides lacks direction in his life and is too prone to run up debts. Strepsiades, having thought up a plan to get his son out of debt, tells Pheidippides that he wants to enrol him in The Thinkery, a school for intellectuals that no self-respecting, athletic young man dares to be seen with. Strepsiades explains that students of The Thinkery learn how to turn inferior

arguments into winning arguments and this is the only way he can beat their aggrieved creditors in court. Pheidippides however will not be persuaded and Strepsiades decides to enroll himself in The Thinkery in spite of his advanced age. There he meets a student who tells him about some of the recent discoveries made by Socrates, the head of The Thinkery, including a new unit of measurement for ascertaining the distance jumped by a flea (a flea's foot, created from a minuscule imprint in wax), the exact cause of the buzzing noise made by a gnat (its arse resembles a trumpet) and a new use for a large pair of compasses (as a kind of fishing-hook for stealing cloaks from pegs over the gymnasium wall). Impressed, Strepsiades begs to be introduced to the man behind these discoveries…



Roman bust of Socrates, c. 100 BC

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'The Death of Socrates' by Jacques-Louis David, 1787. Many believe, including Plato, that Aristophanes' play had a hand in influencing public opinion against the great thinker, leading to his execution.

INTRODUCTION

The satire in this, one of the best known of all Aristophanes' comedies, is directed against the new schools of philosophy, or perhaps we should rather say dialectic, which had lately been introduced, mostly from abroad, at Athens. The doctrines held up to ridicule are those of the 'Sophists' — such men as Thrasymachus from Chalcedon in Bithynia, Gorgias from Leontini in Sicily, Protagoras from Abdera in Thrace, and other foreign scholars and rhetoricians who had flocked to Athens as the intellectual centre of the Hellenic world. Strange to say, Socrates of all people, the avowed enemy and merciless critic of these men and their methods, is taken as their representative, and personally attacked with pitiless raillery. Presumably this was merely because he was the most prominent and noteworthy teacher and thinker of the day, while his grotesque personal appearance and startling eccentricities of behaviour gave a ready handle to caricature. Neither the author nor his audience took the trouble, or were likely to take the trouble, to discriminate nicely; there was, of course, a general resemblance between the Socratic 'elenchos' and the methods of the new practitioners of dialectic; and this was enough for stage purposes. However unjustly, Socrates is taken as typical of the newfangled sophistical teachers, just as in 'The Acharnians' Lamachus, with his Gorgon shield, is introduced as representative of the War party, though that general was not specially responsible for the continuance of hostilities more than anybody else.

Aristophanes' point of view, as a member of the aristocratical party and a fine old Conservative, is that these Sophists, as the professors of the new education had come to be called, and Socrates as their protagonist, were insincere and dangerous innovators, corrupting morals, persuading young men to despise the old-fashioned, home-grown virtues of the State and teaching a system of false and pernicious tricks of verbal fence whereby anything whatever could be proved, and the worse be made to seem the better — provided always sufficient payment were forthcoming. True, Socrates refused to take money from his pupils, and made it his chief reproach against the lecturing Sophists that they received fees; but what of that? The Comedian cannot pay heed to such fine distinctions, but belabours the whole tribe with indiscriminate raillery and scurrility.

The play was produced at the Great Dionysia in 423 B.C., but proved unsuccessful, Cratinus and Amipsias being awarded first and second prize. This is said to have been due to the intrigues and influence of Alcibiades, who

resented the caricature of himself presented in the sporting Phidippides. A second edition of the drama was apparently produced some years later, to which the ‘Parabasis’ of the play as we possess it must belong, as it refers to events subsequent to the date named.

The plot is briefly as follows: Strepsiades, a wealthy country gentleman, has been brought to penury and deeply involved in debt by the extravagance and horsy tastes of his son Phidippides. Having heard of the wonderful new art of argument, the royal road to success in litigation, discovered by the Sophists, he hopes that, if only he can enter the ‘Phrontisterion,’ or Thinking-Shop, of Socrates, he will learn how to turn the tables on his creditors and avoid paying the debts which are dragging him down. He joins the school accordingly, but is found too old and stupid to profit by the lessons. So his son Phidippides is substituted as a more promising pupil. The latter takes to the new learning like a duck to water, and soon shows what progress he has made by beating his father and demonstrating that he is justified by all laws, divine and human, in what he is doing. This opens the old man’s eyes, who sets fire to the ‘Phrontisterion,’ and the play ends in a great conflagration of this home of humbug.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

STREPSIADES.
PHIDIPPIDES.
SERVANT OF STREPSIADES.
SOCRATES.
DISCIPLES OF SOCRATES.
JUST DISCOURSE.
UNJUST DISCOURSE.
PASIAS, a Money-lender.
PASIAS' WITNESS.
AMYNIAS, another Money-lender.
CHAEREPHON.
CHORUS OF CLOUDS.

SCENE: A sleeping-room in Strepsiades' house; then in front of Socrates' house.

THE CLOUDS

STREPSIADES. Great gods! will these nights never end? will daylight never come? I heard the cock crow long ago and my slaves are snoring still! Ah! 'twas not so formerly. Curses on the War! has it not done me ills enough? Now I may not even chastise my own slaves. Again there's this brave lad, who never wakes the whole long night, but, wrapped in his five coverlets, farts away to his heart's content. Come! let me nestle in well and snore too, if it be possible … oh! misery, 'tis vain to think of sleep with all these expenses, this stable, these debts, which are devouring me, thanks to this fine cavalier, who only knows how to look after his long locks, to show himself off in his chariot and to dream of horses! And I, I am nearly dead, when I see the moon bringing the third decade in her train and my liability falling due…. Slave! light the lamp and bring me my tablets. Who are all my creditors? Let me see and reckon up the interest. What is it I owe? … Twelve minae to Pasias…. What! twelve minae to Pasias? … Why did I borrow these? Ah! I know! 'Twas to buy that thoroughbred, which cost me so dear. How I should have prized the stone that had blinded him!

PHIDIPPIDES *(in his sleep)*. That's not fair, Philo! Drive your chariot straight, I say.

STREPSIADES. 'Tis this that is destroying me. He raves about horses, even in his sleep.

PHIDIPPIDES *(still sleeping)*. How many times round the track is the race for the chariots of war?

STREPSIADES. 'Tis your own father you are driving to death … to ruin.
Come! what debt comes next, after that of Pasias? … Three minae to
Amynias for a chariot and its two wheels.

PHIDIPPIDES *(still asleep)*. Give the horse a good roll in the dust and lead him home.

STREPSIADES. Ah! wretched boy! 'tis my money that you are making roll. My creditors have distrained on my goods, and here are others again, who demand security for their interest.

PHIDIPPIDES *(awaking)*. What is the matter with you, father, that you groan and turn about the whole night through?

STREPSIADES. I have a bum-bailiff in the bedclothes biting me.

PHIDIPPIDES. For pity's sake, let me have a little sleep.

STREPSIADES. Very well, sleep on! but remember that all these debts will fall back on your shoulders. Oh! curses on the go-between who made me marry your mother! I lived so happily in the country, a commonplace, everyday life, but a good and easy one — had not a trouble, not a care, was rich in bees, in sheep and in olives. Then forsooth I must marry the niece of Megacles, the son of Megacles; I belonged to the country, she was from the town; she was a haughty, extravagant woman, a true Coesyra. On the nuptial day, when I lay beside her, I was reeking of the dregs of the wine-cup, of cheese and of wool; she was redolent with essences, saffron, tender kisses, the love of spending, of good cheer and of wanton delights. I will not say she did nothing; no, she worked hard … to ruin me, and pretending all the while merely to be showing her the cloak she had woven for me, I said, "Wife, you go too fast about your work, your threads are too closely woven and you use far too much wool."

A SLAVE. There is no more oil in the lamp.

STREPSIADES. Why then did you light such a guzzling lamp? Come here, I am going to beat you!

SLAVE. What for?

STREPSIADES. Because you have put in too thick a wick…. Later, when we had this boy, what was to be his name? 'Twas the cause of much quarrelling with my loving wife. She insisted on having some reference to a horse in his name, that he should be called Xanthippus, Charippus or Callippides. I wanted to name him Phidonides after his grandfather. We disputed long, and finally agreed to style him Phidippides…. She used to fondle and coax him, saying, "Oh! what a joy it will be to me when you have grown up, to see you, like my father, Megacles, clothed in purple and standing up straight in your chariot driving your steeds toward the town." And I would say to him, "When, like your father, you will go, dressed in a skin, to fetch back your goats from Phelleus." Alas! he never listened to me and his madness for horses has shattered my fortune. But by dint of thinking the livelong night, I have discovered a road to salvation, both

miraculous and divine. If he will but follow it, I shall be out of my trouble! First, however, he must be awakened, but let it be done as gently as possible. How shall I manage it? Phidippides! my little Phidippides!

PHIDIPPIDES. What is it, father!

STREPSIADES. Kiss me and give me your hand.

PHIDIPPIDES. There! What's it all about?

STREPSIADES. Tell me! do you love me?

PHIDIPPIDES. By Posidon, the equestrian Posidon! yes, I swear I do.

STREPSIADES. Oh, do not, I pray you, invoke this god of horses; 'tis he who is the cause of all my cares. But if you really love me, and with your whole heart, my boy, believe me.

PHIDIPPIDES. Believe you? about what?

STREPSIADES. Alter your habits forthwith and go and learn what I tell you.

PHIDIPPIDES. Say on, what are your orders?

STREPSIADES. Will you obey me ever so little?

PHIDIPPIDES. By Bacchus, I will obey you.

STREPSIADES. Very well then! Look this way. Do you see that little door and that little house?

PHIDIPPIDES. Yes, father. But what are you driving at?

STREPSIADES. That is the school of wisdom. There, they prove that we are coals enclosed on all sides under a vast extinguisher, which is the sky. If well paid, these men also teach one how to gain lawsuits, whether they be just or not.

PHIDIPPIDES. What do they call themselves?

STREPSIADES. I do not know exactly, but they are deep thinkers and most admirable people.

PHIDIPPIDES. Bah! the wretches! I know them; you mean those quacks with livid faces, those barefoot fellows, such as that miserable Socrates and Chaerephon.

STREPSIADES. Silence! say nothing foolish! If you desire your father not to die of hunger, join their company and let your horses go.

PHIDIPPIDES. No, by Bacchus! even though you gave me the pheasants that Leogoras rears.

STREPSIADES. Oh! my beloved son, I beseech you, go and follow their teachings.

PHIDIPPIDES. And what is it I should learn?

STREPSIADES. 'Twould seem they have two courses of reasoning, the true and the false, and that, thanks to the false, the worst lawsuits can be gained. If then you learn this science, which is false, I shall not pay an obolus of all the debts I have contracted on your account.

PHIDIPPIDES. No, I will not do it. I should no longer dare to look at our gallant horsemen, when I had so tarnished my fair hue of honour.

STREPSIADES. Well then, by Demeter! I will no longer support you, neither you, nor your team, nor your saddle-horse. Go and hang yourself, I turn you out of house and home.

PHIDIPPIDES. My uncle Megacles will not leave me without horses; I shall go to him and laugh at your anger.

STREPSIADES. One rebuff shall not dishearten me. With the help of the gods I will enter this school and learn myself. But at my age, memory has gone and the mind is slow to grasp things. How can all these fine distinctions, these subtleties be learned? Bah! why should I dally thus instead of rapping at the door? Slave, slave! *(He knocks and calls.)* A DISCIPLE. A plague on you! Who are you?

STREPSIADES. Strepsiades, the son of Phido, of the deme of Cicynna.

DISCIPLE. 'Tis for sure only an ignorant and illiterate fellow who lets drive at the door with such kicks. You have brought on a miscarriage — of an idea!

STREPSIADES. Pardon me, pray; for I live far away from here in the country. But tell me, what was the idea that miscarried?

DISCIPLE. I may not tell it to any but a disciple.

STREPSIADES. Then tell me without fear, for I have come to study among you.

DISCIPLE. Very well then, but reflect, that these are mysteries. Lately, a flea bit Chaerephon on the brow and then from there sprang on to the head of Socrates. Socrates asked Chaerephon, "How many times the length of its legs does a flea jump?"

STREPSIADES. And how ever did he set about measuring it?

DISCIPLE. Oh! 'twas most ingenious! He melted some wax, seized the flea and dipped its two feet in the wax, which, when cooled, left them shod with true Persian buskins. These he slipped off and with them measured the distance.

STREPSIADES. Ah! great Zeus! what a brain! what subtlety!

DISCIPLE. I wonder what then would you say, if you knew another of Socrates' contrivances?

STREPSIADES. What is it? Pray tell me.

DISCIPLE. Chaerephon of the deme of Sphettia asked him whether he thought a gnat buzzed through its proboscis or through its rear.

STREPSIADES. And what did he say about the gnat?

DISCIPLE. He said that the gut of the gnat was narrow, and that, in passing through this tiny passage, the air is driven with force towards the breech; then after this slender channel, it encountered the rump, which was distended like a trumpet, and there it resounded sonorously.

STREPSIADES. So the rear of a gnat is a trumpet. Oh! what a splendid discovery! Thrice happy Socrates! 'Twould not be difficult to succeed in a lawsuit, knowing so much about the gut of a gnat!

DISCIPLE. Not long ago a lizard caused him the loss of a sublime thought.

STREPSIADES. In what way, an it please you?

DISCIPLE. One night, when he was studying the course of the moon and its revolutions and was gazing open-mouthed at the heavens, a lizard shitted upon him from the top of the roof.

STREPSIADES. This lizard, that relieved itself over Socrates, tickles me.

DISCIPLE. Yesternight we had nothing to eat.

STREPSIADES. Well! What did he contrive, to secure you some supper?

DISCIPLE. He spread over the table a light layer of cinders, bending an iron rod the while; then he took up a pair of compasses and at the same moment unhooked a piece of the victim which was hanging in the palaestra.

STREPSIADES. And we still dare to admire Thales! Open, open this home of knowledge to me quickly! Haste, haste to show me Socrates; I long to become his disciple. But do, do open the door. *(The disciple admits Strepsiades.)* Ah! by Heracles! what country are those animals from?

DISCIPLE. Why, what are you astonished at? What do you think they resemble?

STREPSIADES. The captives of Pylos. But why do they look so fixedly on the ground?

DISCIPLE. They are seeking for what is below the ground.

STREPSIADES. Ah! 'tis onions they are seeking. Do not give yourselves so much trouble; I know where there are some, fine and large ones. But what are those fellows doing, who are bent all double?

DISCIPLE. They are sounding the abysses of Tartarus.

STREPSIADES. And what is their rump looking at in the heavens?

DISCIPLE. It is studying astronomy on its own account. But come in; so that the master may not find us here.

STREPSIADES. Not yet, not yet; let them not change their position. I want to

tell them my own little matter.

DISCIPLE. But they may not stay too long in the open air and away from school.

STREPSIADES. In the name of all the gods, what is that? Tell me. *(Pointing to a celestial globe.)* DISCIPLE. That is astronomy.

STREPSIADES. And that? *(Pointing to a map.)*

DISCIPLE. Geometry.

STREPSIADES. What is that used for?

DISCIPLE. To measure the land.

STREPSIADES. But that is apportioned by lot.

DISCIPLE. No, no, I mean the entire earth.

STREPSIADES. Ah! what a funny thing! How generally useful indeed is this invention!

DISCIPLE. There is the whole surface of the earth. Look! Here is Athens.

STREPSIADES. Athens! you are mistaken; I see no courts sitting.

DISCIPLE. Nevertheless it is really and truly the Attic territory.

STREPSIADES. And where are my neighbours of Cicynna?

DISCIPLE. They live here. This is Euboea; you see this island, that is so long and narrow.

STREPSIADES. I know. 'Tis we and Pericles, who have stretched it by dint of squeezing it. And where is Lacedaemon?

DISCIPLE. Lacedaemon? Why, here it is, look.

STREPSIADES. How near it is to us! Think it well over, it must be removed to a greater distance.

DISCIPLE. But, by Zeus, that is not possible.

STREPSIADES. Then, woe to you! And who is this man suspended up in a basket?

DISCIPLE. 'Tis *he himself*.

STREPSIADES. Who himself?

DISCIPLE. Socrates.

STREPSIADES. Socrates! Oh! I pray you, call him right loudly for me.

DISCIPLE. Call him yourself; I have no time to waste.

STREPSIADES. Socrates! my little Socrates!

SOCRATES. Mortal, what do you want with me?

STREPSIADES. First, what are you doing up there? Tell me, I beseech you.

SOCRATES. I traverse the air and contemplate the sun.

STREPSIADES. Thus 'tis not on the solid ground, but from the height of this basket, that you slight the gods, if indeed….

SOCRATES. I have to suspend my brain and mingle the subtle essence of my mind with this air, which is of the like nature, in order to clearly penetrate the things of heaven. I should have discovered nothing, had I remained on the ground to consider from below the things that are above; for the earth by its force attracts the sap of the mind to itself. 'Tis just the same with the water-cress.

STREPSIADES. What? Does the mind attract the sap of the water-cress? Ah! my dear little Socrates, come down to me! I have come to ask you for lessons.

SOCRATES. And for what lessons?

STREPSIADES. I want to learn how to speak. I have borrowed money, and my merciless creditors do not leave me a moment's peace; all my goods are at stake.

SOCRATES. And how was it you did not see that you were getting so much into debt?

STREPSIADES. My ruin has been the madness for horses, a most rapacious evil; but teach me one of your two methods of reasoning, the one whose object is not to repay anything, and, may the gods bear witness, that I am ready to pay any fee you may name.

SOCRATES. By which gods will you swear? To begin with, the gods are not a coin current with us.

STREPSIADES. But what do you swear by then? By the iron money of Byzantium?

SOCRATES. Do you really wish to know the truth of celestial matters?

STREPSIADES. Why, truly, if 'tis possible.

SOCRATES. … and to converse with the clouds, who are our genii?

STREPSIADES. Without a doubt.

SOCRATES. Then be seated on this sacred couch.

STREPSIADES. I am seated.

SOCRATES. Now take this chaplet.

STREPSIADES. Why a chaplet? Alas! Socrates, would you sacrifice me, like Athamas?

SOCRATES. No, these are the rites of initiation.

STREPSIADES. And what is it I am to gain?

SOCRATES. You will become a thorough rattle-pate, a hardened old stager, the fine flour of the talkers…. But come, keep quiet.

STREPSIADES. By Zeus! You lie not! Soon I shall be nothing but wheat-flour, if you powder me in this fashion.

SOCRATES. Silence, old man, give heed to the prayers…. Oh! most mighty king, the boundless air, that keepest the earth suspended in space, thou bright Aether and ye venerable goddesses, the Clouds, who carry in your loins the thunder and the lightning, arise, ye sovereign powers and manifest yourselves in the celestial spheres to the eyes of the sage.

STREPSIADES. Not yet! Wait a bit, till I fold my mantle double, so as not to get wet. And to think that I did not even bring my travelling cap! What a misfortune!

SOCRATES. Come, oh! Clouds, whom I adore, come and show yourselves to this man, whether you be resting on the sacred summits of Olympus, crowned with hoar-frost, or tarrying in the gardens of Ocean, your father, forming sacred choruses with the Nymphs; whether you be gathering the waves of the Nile in golden vases or dwelling in the Maeotic marsh or on the snowy rocks of Mimas, hearken to my prayer and accept my offering. May these sacrifices be pleasing to you.

CHORUS. Eternal Clouds, let us appear, let us arise from the roaring depths of Ocean, our father; let us fly towards the lofty mountains, spread our damp wings over their forest-laden summits, whence we will dominate the distant valleys, the harvest fed by the sacred earth, the murmur of the divine streams and the resounding waves of the sea, which the unwearying orb lights up with its glittering beams. But let us shake off the rainy fogs, which hide our immortal beauty and sweep the earth from afar with our gaze.

SOCRATES. Oh, venerated goddesses, yes, you are answering my call! *(To Strepsiades.)* Did you hear their voices mingling with the awful growling of the thunder?

STREPSIADES. Oh! adorable Clouds, I revere you and I too am going to let off *my* thunder, so greatly has your own affrighted me. Faith! whether permitted or not, I must, I must shit!

SOCRATES. No scoffing; do not copy those accursed comic poets. Come, silence! a numerous host of goddesses approaches with songs.

CHORUS. Virgins, who pour forth the rains, let us move toward Attica, the rich country of Pallas, the home of the brave; let us visit the dear land of Cecrops,

where the secret rites are celebrated, where the mysterious sanctuary flies open to the initiate…. What victims are offered there to the deities of heaven! What glorious temples! What statues! What holy prayers to the rulers of Olympus! At every season nothing but sacred festivals, garlanded victims, are to be seen. Then Spring brings round again the joyous feasts of Dionysus, the harmonious contests of the choruses and the serious melodies of the flute.

STREPSIADES. By Zeus! Tell me, Socrates, I pray you, who are these women, whose language is so solemn; can they be demigoddesses?

SOCRATES. Not at all. They are the Clouds of heaven, great goddesses for the lazy; to them we owe all, thoughts, speeches, trickery, roguery, boasting, lies, sagacity.

STREPSIADES. Ah! that was why, as I listened to them, my mind spread out its wings; it burns to babble about trifles, to maintain worthless arguments, to voice its petty reasons, to contradict, to tease some opponent. But are they not going to show themselves? I should like to see them, were it possible.

SOCRATES. Well, look this way in the direction of Parnes; I already see those who are slowly descending.

STREPSIADES. But where, where? Show them to me.

SOCRATES. They are advancing in a throng, following an oblique path across the dales and thickets.

STREPSIADES. 'Tis strange! I can see nothing.

SOCRATES. There, close to the entrance.

STREPSIADES. Hardly, if at all, can I distinguish them.

SOCRATES. You *must* see them clearly now, unless your eyes are filled with gum as thick as pumpkins.

STREPSIADES. Aye, undoubtedly! Oh! the venerable goddesses! Why, they fill up the entire stage.

SOCRATES. And you did not know, you never suspected, that they were

goddesses?

STREPSIADES. No, indeed; methought the Clouds were only fog, dew and vapour.

SOCRATES. But what you certainly do not know is that they are the support of a crowd of quacks, both the diviners, who were sent to Thurium, the notorious physicians, the well-combed fops, who load their fingers with rings down to the nails, and the baggarts, who write dithyrambic verses, all these are idlers whom the Clouds provide a living for, because they sing them in their verses.

STREPSIADES. 'Tis then for this that they praise "the rapid flight of the moist clouds, which veil the brightness of day" and "the waving locks of the hundred-headed Typho" and "the impetuous tempests, which float through the heavens, like birds of prey with aerial wings, loaded with mists" and "the rains, the dew, which the clouds outpour." As a reward for these fine phrases they bolt well-grown, tasty mullet and delicate thrushes.

SOCRATES. Yes, thanks to these. And is it not right and meet?

STREPSIADES. Tell me then why, if these really are the Clouds, they so very much resemble mortals. This is not their usual form.

SOCRATES. What are they like then?

STREPSIADES. I don't know exactly; well, they are like great packs of wool, but not like women — no, not in the least…. And these have noses.

SOCRATES. Answer my questions.

STREPSIADES. Willingly! Go on, I am listening.

SOCRATES. Have you not sometimes seen clouds in the sky like a centaur, a leopard, a wolf or a bull?

STREPSIADES. Why, certainly I have, but what then?

SOCRATES. They take what metamorphosis they like. If they see a debauchee with long flowing locks and hairy as a beast, like the son of Xenophantes, they take the form of a Centaur in derision of his shameful passion.

STREPSIADES. And when they see Simon, that thiever of public money, what do they do then?

SOCRATES. To picture him to the life, they turn at once into wolves.

STREPSIADES. So that was why yesterday, when they saw Cleonymus, who cast away his buckler because he is the veriest poltroon amongst men, they changed into deer.

SOCRATES. And to-day they have seen Clisthenes; you see … they are women.

STREPSIADES. Hail, sovereign goddesses, and if ever you have let your celestial voice be heard by mortal ears, speak to me, oh! speak to me, ye all-powerful queens.

CHORUS. Hail! veteran of the ancient times, you who burn to instruct yourself in fine language. And you, great high-priest of subtle nonsense, tell us your desire. To you and Prodicus alone of all the hollow orationers of to-day have we lent an ear — to Prodicus, because of his knowledge and his great wisdom, and to you, because you walk with head erect, a confident look, barefooted, resigned to everything and proud of our protection.

STREPSIADES. Oh! Earth! What august utterances! how sacred! how wondrous!

SOCRATES. That is because these are the only goddesses; all the rest are pure myth.

STREPSIADES. But by the Earth! is our Father, Zeus, the Olympian, not a god?

SOCRATES. Zeus! what Zeus? Are you mad? There is no Zeus.

STREPSIADES. What are you saying now? Who causes the rain to fall? Answer me that!

SOCRATES. Why, ’tis these, and I will prove it. Have you ever seen it raining without clouds? Let Zeus then cause rain with a clear sky and without their presence!

STREPSIADES. By Apollo! that is powerfully argued! For my own part, I

always thought it was Zeus pissing into a sieve. But tell me, who is it makes the thunder, which I so much dread?

SOCRATES. ’Tis these, when they roll one over the other.

STREPSIADES. But how can that be? you most daring among men!

SOCRATES. Being full of water, and forced to move along, they are of necessity precipitated in rain, being fully distended with moisture from the regions where they have been floating; hence they bump each other heavily and burst with great noise.

STREPSIADES. But is it not Zeus who forces them to move?

SOCRATES. Not at all; ’tis aerial Whirlwind.

STREPSIADES. The Whirlwind! ah! I did not know that. So Zeus, it seems, has no existence, and ’tis the Whirlwind that reigns in his stead? But you have not yet told me what makes the roll of the thunder?

SOCRATES. Have you not understood me then? I tell you, that the Clouds, when full of rain, bump against one another, and that, being inordinately swollen out, they burst with a great noise.

STREPSIADES. How can you make me credit that?

SOCRATES. Take yourself as an example. When you have heartily gorged on stew at the Panathenaea, you get throes of stomach-ache and then suddenly your belly resounds with prolonged growling.

STREPSIADES. Yes, yes, by Apollo! I suffer, I get colic, then the stew sets a-growling like thunder and finally bursts forth with a terrific noise. At first, ’tis but a little gurgling *pappax, pappax*! then it increases, *papapappax!* and when I seek relief, why, ’tis thunder indeed, *papapappax! pappax!! papapappax!!!* just like the clouds.

SOCRATES. Well then, reflect what a noise is produced by your belly, which is but small. Shall not the air, which is boundless, produce these mighty claps of thunder?

STREPSIADES. But tell me this. Whence comes the lightning, the dazzling flame, which at times consumes the man it strikes, at others hardly singes him. Is it not plain, that 'tis Zeus hurling it at the perjurers?

SOCRATES. Out upon the fool! the driveller! he still savours of the golden age! If Zeus strikes at the perjurers, why has he not blasted Simon, Cleonymus and Theorus? Of a surety, greater perjurers cannot exist. No, he strikes his own Temple, and Sunium, the promontory of Athens, and the towering oaks. Now, why should he do that? An oak is no perjurer.

STREPSIADES. I cannot tell, but it seems to me well argued. What is the thunder then?

SOCRATES. When a dry wind ascends to the Clouds and gets shut into them, it blows them out like a bladder; finally, being too confined, it bursts them, escapes with fierce violence and a roar to flash into flame by reason of its own impetuosity.

STREPSIADES. Forsooth, 'tis just what happened to me one day. 'Twas at the feast of Zeus! I was cooking a sow's belly for my family and I had forgotten to slit it open. It swelled out and, suddenly bursting, discharged itself right into my eyes and burnt my face.

CHORUS. Oh, mortal! you, who desire to instruct yourself in our great wisdom, the Athenians, the Greeks will envy you your good fortune. Only you must have the memory and ardour for study, you must know how to stand the tests, hold your own, go forward without feeling fatigue, caring but little for food, abstaining from wine, gymnastic exercises and other similar follies, in fact, you must believe as every man of intellect should, that the greatest of all blessings is to live and think more clearly than the vulgar herd, to shine in the contests of words.

STREPSIADES. If it be a question of hardiness for labour, of spending whole nights at work, of living sparingly, of fighting my stomach and only eating chick-pease, rest assured, I am as hard as an anvil.

SOCRATES. Henceforward, following our example, you will recognize no other gods but Chaos, the Clouds and the Tongue, these three alone.

STREPSIADES. I would not speak to the others, even if I should meet them in

the street; not a single sacrifice, not a libation, not a grain of incense for them!

CHORUS. Tell us boldly then what you want of us; you cannot fail to succeed, if you honour and revere us and if you are resolved to become a clever man.

STREPSIADES. Oh, sovereign goddesses, 'tis but a very small favour that I ask of you; grant that I may distance all the Greeks by a hundred stadia in the art of speaking.

CHORUS. We grant you this, and henceforward no eloquence shall more often succeed with the people than your own.

STREPSIADES. May the god shield me from possessing great eloquence! 'Tis not what I want. I want to be able to turn bad lawsuits to my own advantage and to slip through the fingers of my creditors.

CHORUS. It shall be as you wish, for your ambitions are modest. Commit yourself fearlessly to our ministers, the sophists.

STREPSIADES. This will I do, for I trust in you. Moreover there is no drawing back, what with these cursed horses and this marriage, which has eaten up my vitals. So let them do with me as they will; I yield my body to them. Come blows, come hunger, thirst, heat or cold, little matters it to me; they may flay me, if I only escape my debts, if only I win the reputation of being a bold rascal, a fine speaker, impudent, shameless, a braggart, and adept at stringing lies, an old stager at quibbles, a complete table of the laws, a thorough rattle, a fox to slip through any hole; supple as a leathern strap, slippery as an eel, an artful fellow, a blusterer, a villain; a knave with a hundred faces, cunning, intolerable, a gluttonous dog. With such epithets do I seek to be greeted; on these terms, they can treat me as they choose, and, if they wish, by Demeter! they can turn me into sausages and serve me up to the philosophers.

CHORUS. Here have we a bold and well-disposed pupil indeed. When we shall have taught you, your glory among the mortals will reach even to the skies.

STREPSIADES. Wherein will that profit me?

CHORUS. You will pass your whole life among us and will be the most envied of men.

STREPSIADES. Shall I really ever see such happiness?

CHORUS. Clients will be everlastingly besieging your door in crowds, burning to get at you, to explain their business to you and to consult you about their suits, which, in return for your ability, will bring you in great sums. But, Socrates, begin the lessons you want to teach this old man; rouse his mind, try the strength of his intelligence.

SOCRATES. Come, tell me the kind of mind you have; 'tis important I know this, that I may order my batteries against you in a new fashion.

STREPSIADES. Eh, what! in the name of the gods, are you purposing to assault me then?

SOCRATES. No. I only wish to ask you some questions. Have you any memory?

STREPSIADES. That depends: if anything is owed me, my memory is excellent, but if I owe, alas! I have none whatever.

SOCRATES. Have you a natural gift for speaking?

STREPSIADES. For speaking, no; for cheating, yes.

SOCRATES. How will you be able to learn then?

STREPSIADES. Very easily, have no fear.

SOCRATES. Thus, when I throw forth some philosophical thought anent things celestial, you will seize it in its very flight?

STREPSIADES. Then I am to snap up wisdom much as a dog snaps up a morsel?

SOCRATES. Oh! the ignoramus! the barbarian! I greatly fear, old man, 'twill be needful for me to have recourse to blows. Now, let me hear what you do when you are beaten.

STREPSIADES. I receive the blow, then wait a moment, take my witnesses and finally summon my assailant at law.

SOCRATES. Come, take off your cloak.

STREPSIADES. Have I robbed you of anything?

SOCRATES. No, but ’tis usual to enter the school without your cloak.

STREPSIADES. But I am not come here to look for stolen goods.

SOCRATES. Off with it, fool!

STREPSIADES. Tell me, if I prove thoroughly attentive and learn with zeal, which of your disciples shall I resemble, do you think?

SOCRATES. You will be the image of Chaerephon.

STREPSIADES. Ah! unhappy me! I shall then be but half alive?

SOCRATES. A truce to this chatter! follow me and no more of it.

STREPSIADES. First give me a honey-cake, for to descend down there sets me all a-tremble; meseems ’tis the cave of Trophonius.

SOCRATES. But get in with you! What reason have you for thus dallying at the door?

CHORUS. Good luck! you have courage; may you succeed, you, who, though already so advanced in years, wish to instruct your mind with new studies and practise it in wisdom!

CHORUS *(Parabasis)*. Spectators! By Bacchus, whose servant I am, I will frankly tell you the truth. May I secure both victory and renown as certainly as I hold you for adept critics and as I regard this comedy as my best. I wished to give you the first view of a work, which had cost me much trouble, but I withdrew, unjustly beaten by unskilful rivals. ’Tis you, oh, enlightened public, for whom I have prepared my piece, that I reproach with this. Nevertheless I shall never willingly cease to seek the approval of the discerning. I have not forgotten the day, when men, whom one is happy to have for an audience, received my ‘Young Man’ and my ‘Debauchee’ with so much favour in this very place. Then as yet virgin, my Muse had not attained the legal age for maternity; she had to expose her first-born for another to adopt, and it has since grown up

under your generous patronage. Ever since you have as good as sworn me your faithful alliance. Thus, like Electra of the poets, my comedy has come to seek you to-day, hoping again to encounter such enlightened spectators. As far away as she can discern her Orestes, she will be able to recognize him by his curly head. And note her modest demeanour! She has not sewn on a piece of hanging leather, thick and reddened at the end, to cause laughter among the children; she does not rail at the bald, neither does she dance the cordax; no old man is seen, who, while uttering his lines, batters his questioner with a stick to make his poor jests pass muster. She does not rush upon the scene carrying a torch and screaming, 'La, la! la, la!' No, she relies upon herself and her verses…. My value is so well known, that I take no further pride in it. I do not seek to deceive you, by reproducing the same subjects two or three times; I always invent fresh themes to present before you, themes that have no relation to each other and that are all clever. I attacked Cleon to his face and when he was all-powerful; but he has fallen, and now I have no desire to kick him when he is down. My rivals, on the contrary, once that this wretched Hyperbolus has given them the cue, have never ceased setting upon both him and his mother. First Eupolis presented his 'Maricas'; this was simply my 'Knights,' whom this plagiarist had clumsily furbished up again by adding to the piece an old drunken woman, so that she might dance the cordax. 'Twas an old idea, taken from Phrynichus, who caused his old hag to be devoured by a monster of the deep. Then Hermippus fell foul of Hyperbolus and now all the others fall upon him and repeat my comparison of the eels. May those who find amusement in their pieces not be pleased with mine, but as for you, who love and applaud my inventions, why, posterity will praise your good taste.

Oh, ruler of Olympus, all-powerful king of the gods, great Zeus, it is thou whom I first invoke; protect this chorus; and thou too, Posidon, whose dread trident upheaves at the will of thy anger both the bowels of the earth and the salty waves of the ocean. I invoke my illustrious father, the divine Aether, the universal sustainer of life, and Phoebus, who, from the summit of his chariot, sets the world aflame with his dazzling rays, Phoebus, a mighty deity amongst the gods and adored amongst mortals.

Most wise spectators, lend us all your attention. Give heed to our just reproaches. There exist no gods to whom this city owes more than it does to us, whom alone you forget. Not a sacrifice, not a libation is there for those who protect you! Have you decreed some mad expedition? Well! we thunder or we fall down in rain. When you chose that enemy of heaven, the Paphlagonian

tanner, for a general, we knitted our brow, we caused our wrath to break out; the lightning shot forth, the thunder pealed, the moon deserted her course and the sun at once veiled his beam threatening no longer to give you light, if Cleon became general. Nevertheless you elected him; 'tis said, Athens never resolves upon some fatal step but the gods turn these errors into her greatest gain. Do you wish that this election should even now be a success for you? 'Tis a very simple thing to do; condemn this rapacious gull named Cleon for bribery and extortion, fit a wooden collar tight round his neck, and your error will be rectified and the commonweal will at once regain its old prosperity.

Aid me also, Phoebus, god of Delos, who reignest on the cragged peaks of Cynthia; and thou, happy virgin, to whom the Lydian damsels offer pompous sacrifice in a temple of gold; and thou, goddess of our country, Athené, armed with the aegis, the protectress of Athens; and thou, who, surrounded by the Bacchanals of Delphi, roamest over the rocks of Parnassus shaking the flame of thy resinous torch, thou, Bacchus, the god of revel and joy.

As we were preparing to come here, we were hailed by the Moon and were charged to wish joy and happiness both to the Athenians and to their allies; further, she said that she was enraged and that you treated her very shamefully, her, who does not pay you in words alone, but who renders you all real benefits. Firstly, thanks to her, you save at least a drachma each month for lights, for each, as he is leaving home at night, says, "Slave, buy no torches, for the moonlight is beautiful," — not to name a thousand other benefits. Nevertheless you do not reckon the days correctly and your calendar is naught but confusion. Consequently the gods load her with threats each time they get home and are disappointed of their meal, because the festival has not been kept in the regular order of time. When you should be sacrificing, you are putting to the torture or administering justice. And often, we others, the gods, are fasting in token of mourning for the death of Memnon or Sarpedon, while you are devoting yourselves to joyous libations. 'Tis for this, that last year, when the lot would have invested Hyperbolus with the duty of Amphictyon, we took his crown from him, to teach him that time must be divided according to the phases of the moon.

SOCRATES. By Respiration, the Breath of Life! By Chaos! By the Air! I have never seen a man so gross, so inept, so stupid, so forgetful. All the little quibbles, which I teach him, he forgets even before he has learnt them. Yet I will not give it up, I will make him come out here into the open air. Where are you, Strepsiades? Come, bring your couch out here.

STREPSIADES. But the bugs will not allow me to bring it.

SOCRATES. Have done with such nonsense! place it there and pay attention.

STREPSIADES. Well, here I am.

SOCRATES. Good! Which science of all those you have never been taught, do you wish to learn first? The measures, the rhythms or the verses?

STREPSIADES. Why, the measures; the flour dealer cheated me out of two *choenixes* the other day.

SOCRATES. 'Tis not about that I ask you, but which, according to you, is the best measure, the trimeter or the tetrameter?

STREPSIADES. The one I prefer is the semisextarius.

SOCRATES. You talk nonsense, my good fellow.

STREPSIADES. I will wager your tetrameter is the semisextarius.

SOCRATES. Plague seize the dunce and the fool! Come, perchance you will learn the rhythms quicker.

STREPSIADES. Will the rhythms supply me with food?

SOCRATES. First they will help you to be pleasant in company, then to know what is meant by oenoplian rhythm and what by the dactylic.

STREPSIADES. Of the dactyl? I know that quite well.

SOCRATES. What is it then?

STREPSIADES. Why, 'tis this finger; formerly, when a child, I used this one.

SOCRATES. You are as low-minded as you are stupid.

STREPSIADES. But, wretched man, I do not want to learn all this.

SOCRATES. Then what *do* you want to know?

STREPSIADES. Not that, not that, but the art of false reasoning.

SOCRATES. But you must first learn other things. Come, what are the male quadrupeds?

STREPSIADES. Oh! I know the males thoroughly. Do you take me for a fool then? The ram, the buck, the bull, the dog, the pigeon.

SOCRATES. Do you see what you are doing; is not the female pigeon called the same as the male?

STREPSIADES. How else? Come now?

SOCRATES. How else? With you then 'tis pigeon and pigeon!

STREPSIADES. 'Tis true, by Posidon! but what names do you want me to give them?

SOCRATES. Term the female pigeonnette and the male pigeon.

STREPSIADES. Pigeonnette! hah! by the Air! That's splendid! for that lesson bring out your kneading-trough and I will fill him with flour to the brim.

SOCRATES. There you are wrong again; you make *trough* masculine and it should be feminine.

STREPSIADES. What? if I say *him*, do I make the *trough* masculine?

SOCRATES. Assuredly! would you not say him for Cleonymus?

STREPSIADES. Well?

SOCRATES. Then trough is of the same gender as Cleonymus?

STREPSIADES. Oh! good sir! Cleonymus never had a kneading-trough; he used a round mortar for the purpose. But come, tell me what I *should* say?

SOCRATES. For trough you should say *her* as you would for Sostraté.

STREPSIADES. *Her*?

SOCRATES. In this manner you make it truly female.

STREPSIADES. That's it! *Her* for trough and *her* for Cleonymus.

SOCRATES. Now I must teach you to distinguish the masculine proper names from those that are feminine.

STREPSIADES. Ah! I know the female names well.

SOCRATES. Name some then.

STREPSIADES. Lysilla, Philinna, Clitagora, Demetria.

SOCRATES. And what are masculine names?

STREPSIADES. They are countless — Philoxenus, Melesias, Amynias.

SOCRATES. But, wretched man, the last two are not masculine.

STREPSIADES. You do not reckon them masculine?

SOCRATES. Not at all. If you met Amynias, how would you hail him?

STREPSIADES. How? Why, I should shout, "Hi! hither, Amyni*a*!"

SOCRATES. Do you see? 'tis a female name that you give him.

STREPSIADES. And is it not rightly done, since he refuses military service? But what use is there in learning what we all know?

SOCRATES. You know nothing about it. Come, lie down there.

STREPSIADES. What for?

SOCRATES. Ponder awhile over matters that interest you.

STREPSIADES. Oh! I pray you, not there! but, if I must lie down and ponder, let me lie on the ground.

SOCRATES. 'Tis out of the question. Come! on to the couch!

STREPSIADES. What cruel fate! What a torture the bugs will this day put me to!

SOCRATES. Ponder and examine closely, gather your thoughts together, let your mind turn to every side of things; if you meet with a difficulty, spring quickly to some other idea; above all, keep your eyes away from all gentle sleep.

STREPSIADES. Oh, woe, woe! oh, woe, woe!

SOCRATES. What ails you? why do you cry so?

STREPSIADES. Oh! I am a dead man! Here are these cursed Corinthians advancing upon me from all corners of the couch; they are biting me, they are gnawing at my sides, they are drinking all my blood, they are twitching off my testicles, they are exploring all up my back, they are killing me!

SOCRATES. Not so much wailing and clamour, if you please.

STREPSIADES. How can I obey? I have lost my money and my complexion, my blood and my slippers, and to cap my misery, I must keep awake on this couch, when scarce a breath of life is left in me.

SOCRATES. Well now! what are you doing? are you reflecting?

STREPSIADES. Yes, by Posidon!

SOCRATES. What about?

STREPSIADES. Whether the bugs will not entirely devour me.

SOCRATES. May death seize you, accursed man!

STREPSIADES. Ah! it has already.

SOCRATES. Come, no giving way! Cover up your head; the thing to do is to find an ingenious alternative.

STREPSIADES. An alternative! ah! I only wish one would come to me from within these coverlets!

SOCRATES. Hold! let us see what our fellow is doing. Ho! you! are you asleep?

STREPSIADES. No, by Apollo!

SOCRATES. Have you got hold of anything?

STREPSIADES. No, nothing whatever.

SOCRATES. Nothing at all!

STREPSIADES. No, nothing but my tool, which I've got in my hand.

SOCRATES. Are you not going to cover your head immediately and ponder?

STREPSIADES. Over what? Come, Socrates, tell me.

SOCRATES. Think first what you want, and then tell me.

STREPSIADES. But I have told you a thousand times what I want. 'Tis not to pay any of my creditors.

SOCRATES. Come, wrap yourself up; concentrate your mind, which wanders too lightly, study every detail, scheme and examine thoroughly.

STREPSIADES. Oh, woe! woe! oh dear! oh dear!

SOCRATES. Keep yourself quiet, and if any notion troubles you, put it quickly aside, then resume it and think over it again.

STREPSIADES. My dear little Socrates!

SOCRATES. What is it, old greybeard?

STREPSIADES. I have a scheme for not paying my debts.

SOCRATES. Let us hear it.

STREPSIADES. Tell me, if I purchased a Thessalian witch, I could make the moon descend during the night and shut it, like a mirror, into a round box and there keep it carefully….

SOCRATES. How would you gain by that?

STREPSIADES. How? Why, if the moon did not rise, I would have no interest to pay.

SOCRATES. Why so?

STREPSIADES. Because money is lent by the month.

SOCRATES. Good! but I am going to propose another trick to you. If you were condemned to pay five talents, how would you manage to quash that verdict? Tell me.

STREPSIADES. How? how? I don't know, I must think.

SOCRATES. Do you always shut your thoughts within yourself. Let your ideas fly in the air, like a may-bug, tied by the foot with a thread.

STREPSIADES. I have found a very clever way to annul that conviction; you will admit that much yourself.

SOCRATES. What is it?

STREPSIADES. Have you ever seen a beautiful, transparent stone at the druggists, with which you may kindle fire?

SOCRATES. You mean a crystal lens.

STREPSIADES. Yes.

SOCRATES. Well, what then?

STREPSIADES. If I placed myself with this stone in the sun and a long way off from the clerk, while he was writing out the conviction, I could make all the wax, upon which the words were written, melt.

SOCRATES. Well thought out, by the Graces!

STREPSIADES. Ah! I am delighted to have annulled the decree that was to cost me five talents.

SOCRATES. Come, take up this next question quickly.

STREPSIADES. Which?

SOCRATES. If, when summoned to court, you were in danger of losing your case for want of witnesses, how would you make the conviction fall upon your opponent?

STREPSIADES. ’Tis very simple and most easy.

SOCRATES. Let me hear.

STREPSIADES. This way. If another case had to be pleaded before mine was called, I should run and hang myself.

SOCRATES. You talk rubbish!

STREPSIADES. Not so, by the gods! if I was dead, no action could lie against me.

SOCRATES. You are merely beating the air. Begone! I will give you no more lessons.

STREPSIADES. Why not? Oh! Socrates! in the name of the gods!

SOCRATES. But you forget as fast as you learn. Come, what was the thing I taught you first? Tell me.

STREPSIADES. Ah! let me see. What was the first thing? What was it then? Ah! that thing in which we knead the bread, oh! my god! what do you call it?

SOCRATES. Plague take the most forgetful and silliest of old addlepates!

STREPSIADES. Alas! what a calamity! what will become of me? I am undone if I do not learn how to ply my tongue. Oh! Clouds! give me good advice.

CHORUS. Old man, we counsel you, if you have brought up a son, to send him to learn in your stead.

STREPSIADES. Undoubtedly I have a son, as well endowed as the best, but he is unwilling to learn. What will become of me?

CHORUS. And you don’t make him obey you?

STREPSIADES. You see, he is big and strong; moreover, through his mother he is a descendant of those fine birds, the race of Coesyra. Nevertheless, I will go and find him, and if he refuses, I will turn him out of the house. Go in, Socrates, and wait for me awhile.

CHORUS *(to Socrates)*. Do you understand, that, thanks to us, you will be loaded with benefits? Here is a man, ready to obey you in all things. You see how he is carried away with admiration and enthusiasm. Profit by it to clip him as short as possible; fine chances are all too quickly gone.

STREPSIADES. No, by the Clouds! you stay no longer here; go and devour the ruins of your uncle Megacles' fortune.

PHIDIPPIDES. Oh! my poor father! what has happened to you? By the Olympian Zeus! you are no longer in your senses!

STREPSIADES. See! see! "the Olympian Zeus." Oh! the fool! to believe in Zeus at your age!

PHIDIPPIDES. What is there in that to make you laugh?

STREPSIADES. You are then a tiny little child, if you credit such antiquated rubbish! But come here, that I may teach you; I will tell you something very necessary to know to be a man; but you will not repeat it to anybody.

PHIDIPPIDES. Come, what is it?

STREPSIADES. Just now you swore by Zeus.

PHIDIPPIDES. Aye, that I did.

STREPSIADES. Do you see how good it is to learn? Phidippides, there is no Zeus.

PHIDIPPIDES. What is there then?

STREPSIADES. 'Tis the Whirlwind, that has driven out Jupiter and is King now.

PHIDIPPIDES. Go to! what drivel!

STREPSIADES. Know it to be the truth.

PHIDIPPIDES. And who says so?

STREPSIADES. 'Tis Socrates, the Melian, and Chaerephon, who knows how to measure the jump of a flea.

PHIDIPPIDES. Have you reached such a pitch of madness that you believe those bilious fellows?

STREPSIADES. Use better language, and do not insult men who are clever and full of wisdom, who, to economize, are never shaved, shun the gymnasia and never go to the baths, while you, you only await my death to eat up my wealth. But come, come as quickly as you can to learn in my stead.

PHIDIPPIDES. And what good can be learnt of them?

STREPSIADES. What good indeed? Why, all human knowledge. Firstly, you will know yourself grossly ignorant. But await me here awhile.

PHIDIPPIDES. Alas! what is to be done? My father has lost his wits. Must I have him certificated for lunacy, or must I order his coffin?

STREPSIADES. Come! what kind of bird is this? tell me.

PHIDIPPIDES. A pigeon.

STREPSIADES. Good! And this female?

PHIDIPPIDES. A pigeon.

STREPSIADES. The same for both? You make me laugh! For the future you will call this one a pigeonnette and the other a pigeon.

PHIDIPPIDES. A pigeonnette! These then are the fine things you have just learnt at the school of these sons of the Earth!

STREPSIADES. And many others; but what I learnt I forgot at once, because I am too old.

PHIDIPPIDES. So this is why you have lost your cloak?

STREPSIADES. I have not lost it, I have consecrated it to Philosophy.

PHIDIPPIDES. And what have you done with your sandals, you poor fool?

STREPSIADES. If I have lost them, it is for what was necessary, just as Pericles did. But come, move yourself, let us go in; if necessary, do wrong to obey your father. When you were six years old and still lisped, 'twas I who obeyed you. I remember at the feasts of Zeus you had a consuming wish for a little chariot and I bought it for you with the first obolus which I received as a juryman in the Courts.

PHIDIPPIDES. You will soon repent of what you ask me to do.

STREPSIADES. Oh! now I am happy! He obeys. Here, Socrates, here! Come out quick! Here I am bringing you my son; he refused, but I have persuaded him.

SOCRATES. Why, he is but a child yet. He is not used to these baskets, in which we suspend our minds.

PHIDIPPIDES. To make you better used to them, I would you were hung.

STREPSIADES. A curse upon you! you insult your master!

SOCRATES. "I would you were hung!" What a stupid speech! and so emphatically spoken! How can one ever get out of an accusation with such a tone, summon witnesses or touch or convince? And yet when we think, Hyperbolus learnt all this for one talent!

STREPSIADES. Rest undisturbed and teach him. 'Tis a most intelligent nature. Even when quite little he amused himself at home with making houses, carving boats, constructing little chariots of leather, and understood wonderfully how to make frogs out of pomegranate rinds. Teach him both methods of reasoning, the strong and also the weak, which by false arguments triumphs over the strong; if not the two, at least the false, and that in every possible way.

SOCRATES. 'Tis Just and Unjust Discourse themselves that shall instruct him.

STREPSIADES. I go, but forget it not, he must always, always be able to confound the true.

JUST DISCOURSE. Come here! Shameless as you may be, will you dare to show your face to the spectators?

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Take me where you list. I seek a throng, so that I may the better annihilate you.

JUST DISCOURSE. Annihilate me! Do you forget who you are?

UNJUST DISCOURSE. I am Reasoning.

JUST DISCOURSE. Yes, the weaker Reasoning.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. But I triumph over you, who claim to be the stronger.

JUST DISCOURSE. By what cunning shifts, pray?

UNJUST DISCOURSE. By the invention of new maxims.

JUST DISCOURSE. … which are received with favour by these fools.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Say rather, by these wiseacres.

JUST DISCOURSE. I am going to destroy you mercilessly.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. How pray? Let us see you do it.

JUST DISCOURSE. By saying what is true.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. I shall retort and shall very soon have the better of you. First, I maintain that justice has no existence.

JUST DISCOURSE. Has no existence?

UNJUST DISCOURSE. No existence! Why, where are they?

JUST DISCOURSE. With the gods.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. How then, if justice exists, was Zeus not put to death for having put his father in chains?

JUST DISCOURSE. Bah! this is enough to turn my stomach! A basin, quick!

UNJUST DISCOURSE. You are an old driveller and stupid withal.

JUST DISCOURSE. And you a debauchee and a shameless fellow.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Hah! What sweet expressions!

JUST DISCOURSE. An impious buffoon!

UNJUST DISCOURSE. You crown me with roses and with lilies.

JUST DISCOURSE. A parricide.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Why, you shower gold upon me.

JUST DISCOURSE. Formerly, ’twas a hailstorm of blows.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. I deck myself with your abuse.

JUST DISCOURSE. What impudence!

UNJUST DISCOURSE. What tomfoolery!

JUST DISCOURSE. ’Tis because of you that the youth no longer attends the schools. The Athenians will soon recognize what lessons you teach those who are fools enough to believe you.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. You are overwhelmed with wretchedness.

JUST DISCOURSE. And you, you prosper. Yet you were poor when you said, “I am the Mysian Telephus,” and used to stuff your wallet with maxims of Pandeletus to nibble at.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Oh! the beautiful wisdom, of which you are now boasting!

JUST DISCOURSE. Madman! But yet madder the city that keeps you, you, the corrupter of its youth!

UNJUST DISCOURSE. ’Tis not you who will teach this young man; you are as old and out of date as Saturn.

JUST DISCOURSE. Nay, it will certainly be I, if he does not wish to be lost and to practise verbosity only.

UNJUST DISCOURSE *(to Phidippides)*. Come hither and leave him to beat the air.

JUST DISCOURSE *(to Unjust Discourse)*. Evil be unto you, if you touch him.

CHORUS. A truce to your quarrellings and abuse! But expound, you, what you taught us formerly, and you, your new doctrine. Thus, after hearing each of you argue, he will be able to choose betwixt the two schools.

JUST DISCOURSE. I am quite agreeable.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. And I too.

CHORUS. Who is to speak first?

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Let it be my opponent, he has my full consent; then I will follow upon the very ground he shall have chosen and shall shatter him with a hail of new ideas and subtle fancies; if after that he dares to breathe another word, I shall sting him in the face and in the eyes with our maxims, which are as keen as the sting of a wasp, and he will die.

CHORUS. Here are two rivals confident in their powers of oratory and in the thoughts over which they have pondered so long. Let us see which will come triumphant out of the contest. This wisdom, for which my friends maintain such a persistent fight, is in great danger. Come then, you, who crowned men of other days with so many virtues, plead the cause dear to you, make yourself known to us.

JUST DISCOURSE. Very well, I will tell you what was the old education, when I used to teach justice with so much success and when modesty was held in veneration. Firstly, it was required of a child, that it should not utter a word. In the street, when they went to the music-school, all the youths of the same district marched lightly clad and ranged in good order, even when the snow was falling in great flakes. At the master's house they had to stand, their legs apart, and they were taught to sing either, "Pallas, the Terrible, who overturneth cities," or "A noise resounded from afar" in the solemn tones of the ancient harmony. If anyone indulged in buffoonery or lent his voice any of the soft inflexions, like

those which to-day the disciples of Phrynis take so much pains to form, he was treated as an enemy of the Muses and belaboured with blows. In the wrestling school they would sit with outstretched legs and without display of any indecency to the curious. When they rose, they would smooth over the sand, so as to leave no trace to excite obscene thoughts. Never was a child rubbed with oil below the belt; the rest of their bodies thus retained its fresh bloom and down, like a velvety peach. They were not to be seen approaching a lover and themselves rousing his passion by soft modulation of the voice and lustful gaze. At table, they would not have dared, before those older than themselves, to have taken a radish, an aniseed or a leaf of parsley, and much less eat fish or thrushes or cross their legs.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. What antiquated rubbish! Have we got back to the days of the festivals of Zeus Polieus, to the Buphonia, to the time of the poet Cecydes and the golden cicadas?

JUST DISCOURSE. 'Tis nevertheless by suchlike teaching I built up the men of Marathon. But you, you teach the children of to-day to bundle themselves quickly into their clothes, and I am enraged when I see them at the Panathenaea forgetting Athené while they dance, and covering themselves with their bucklers. Hence, young man, dare to range yourself beside me, who follow justice and truth; you will then be able to shun the public place, to refrain from the baths, to blush at all that is shameful, to fire up if your virtue is mocked at, to give place to your elders, to honour your parents, in short, to avoid all that is evil. Be modesty itself, and do not run to applaud the dancing girls; if you delight in such scenes, some courtesan will cast you her apple and your reputation will be done for. Do not bandy words with your father, nor treat him as a dotard, nor reproach the old man, who has cherished you, with his age.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. If you listen to him, by Bacchus! you will be the image of the sons of Hippocrates and will be called *mother's great ninny*.

JUST DISCOURSE. No, but you will pass your days at the gymnasia, glowing with strength and health; you will not go to the public place to cackle and wrangle as is done nowadays; you will not live in fear that you may be dragged before the courts for some trifle exaggerated by quibbling. But you will go down to the Academy to run beneath the sacred olives with some virtuous friend of your own age, your head encircled with the white reed, enjoying your ease and breathing the perfume of the yew and of the fresh sprouts of the poplar, rejoicing

in the return of springtide and gladly listening to the gentle rustle of the plane-tree and the elm. If you devote yourself to practising my precepts, your chest will be stout, your colour glowing, your shoulders broad, your tongue short, your hips muscular, but your penis small. But if you follow the fashions of the day, you will be pallid in hue, have narrow shoulders, a narrow chest, a long tongue, small hips and a big tool; you will know how to spin forth long-winded arguments on law. You will be persuaded also to regard as splendid everything that is shameful and as shameful everything that is honourable; in a word, you will wallow in debauchery like Antimachus.

CHORUS. How beautiful, high-souled, brilliant is this wisdom that you practise! What a sweet odour of honesty is emitted by your discourse! Happy were those men of other days who lived when you were honoured! And you, seductive talker, come, find some fresh arguments, for your rival has done wonders. Bring out against him all the battery of your wit, if you desire to beat him and not to be laughed out of court.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. At last! I was choking with impatience, I was burning to upset all his arguments! If I am called the Weaker Reasoning in the schools, 'tis precisely because I was the first before all others to discover the means to confute the laws and the decrees of justice. To invoke solely the weaker arguments and yet triumph is a talent worth more than a hundred thousand drachmae. But see how I shall batter down the sort of education of which he is so proud. Firstly, he forbids you to bathe in hot water. What grounds have you for condemning hot baths?

JUST DISCOURSE. Because they are baneful and enervate men.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Enough said! Oh! you poor wrestler! From the very outset I have seized you and hold you round the middle; you cannot escape me. Tell me, of all the sons of Zeus, who had the stoutest heart, who performed the most doughty deeds?

JUST DISCOURSE. None, in my opinion, surpassed Heracles.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Where have you ever seen cold baths called 'Baths of Heracles'? And yet who was braver than he?

JUST DISCOURSE. 'Tis because of such quibbles, that the baths are seen crowded with young folk, who chatter there the livelong day while the gymnasia

remain empty.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Next you condemn the habit of frequenting the market-place, while I approve this. If it were wrong Homer would never have made Nestor speak in public as well as all his wise heroes. As for the art of speaking, he tells you, young men should not practise it; I hold the contrary. Furthermore he preaches chastity to them. Both precepts are equally harmful. Have you ever seen chastity of any use to anyone? Answer and try to confute me.

JUST DISCOURSE. To many; for instance, Peleus won a sword thereby.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. A sword! Ah! what a fine present to make him! Poor wretch! Hyperbolus, the lamp-seller, thanks to his villainy, has gained more than … I do not know how many talents, but certainly no sword.

JUST DISCOURSE. Peleus owed it to his chastity that he became the husband of Thetis.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. … who left him in the lurch, for he was not the most ardent; in those nocturnal sports between two sheets, which so please women, he possessed but little merit. Get you gone, you are but an old fool. But you, young man, just consider a little what this temperance means and the delights of which it deprives you — young fellows, women, play, dainty dishes, wine, boisterous laughter. And what is life worth without these? Then, if you happen to commit one of these faults inherent in human weakness, some seduction or adultery, and you are caught in the act, you are lost, if you cannot speak. But follow my teaching and you will be able to satisfy your passions, to dance, to laugh, to blush at nothing. Are you surprised in adultery? Then up and tell the husband you are not guilty, and recall to him the example of Zeus, who allowed himself to be conquered by love and by women. Being but a mortal, can you be stronger than a god?

JUST DISCOURSE. And if your pupil gets impaled, his hairs plucked out, and he is seared with a hot ember, how are you going to prove to him that he is not a filthy debauchee?

UNJUST DISCOURSE. And wherein lies the harm of being so?

JUST DISCOURSE. Is there anything worse than to have such a character?

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Now what will you say, if I beat you even on this point?

JUST DISCOURSE. I should certainly have to be silent then.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Well then, reply! Our advocates, what are they?

JUST DISCOURSE. Low scum.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Nothing is more true. And our tragic poets?

JUST DISCOURSE. Low scum.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Well said again. And our demagogues?

JUST DISCOURSE. Low scum.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. You admit that you have spoken nonsense. And the spectators, what are they for the most part? Look at them.

JUST DISCOURSE. I am looking at them.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. Well! What do you see?

JUST DISCOURSE. By the gods, they are nearly all low scum. See, this one I know to be such and that one and that other with the long hair.

UNJUST DISCOURSE. What have you to say, then?

JUST DISCOURSE. I am beaten. Debauchees! in the name of the gods, receive my cloak; I pass over to your ranks.

SOCRATES. Well then! do you take away your son or do you wish me to teach him how to speak?

STREPSIADES. Teach him, chastise him and do not fail to sharpen his tongue well, on one side for petty lawsuits and on the other for important cases.

SOCRATES. Make yourself easy, I shall return to you an accomplished sophist.

PHIDIPPIDES. Very pale then and thoroughly hang-dog-looking.

STREPSIADES. Take him with you.

PHIDIPPIDES. I do assure you, you will repent it.

CHORUS. Judges, we are all about to tell you what you will gain by awarding us the crown as equity requires of you. In spring, when you wish to give your fields the first dressing, we will rain upon you first; the others shall wait. Then we will watch over your corn and over your vine-stocks; they will have no excess to fear, neither of heat nor of wet. But if a mortal dares to insult the goddesses of the Clouds, let him think of the ills we shall pour upon him. For him neither wine nor any harvest at all! Our terrible slings will mow down his young olive plants and his vines. If he is making bricks, it will rain, and our round hailstones will break the tiles of his roof. If he himself marries or any of his relations or friends, we shall cause rain to fall the whole night long. Verily, he would prefer to live in Egypt than to have given this iniquitous verdict.

STREPSIADES. Another four, three, two days, then the eve, then the day, the fatal day of payment! I tremble, I quake, I shudder, for 'tis the day of the old moon and the new. Then all my creditors take the oath, pay their deposits, swear my downfall and my ruin. As for me, I beseech them to be reasonable, to be just, "My friend, do not demand this sum, wait a little for this other and give me time for this third one." Then they will pretend that at this rate they will never be repaid, will accuse me of bad faith and will threaten me with the law. Well then, let them sue me! I care nothing for that, if only Phidippides has learnt to speak fluently. I go to find out, let me knock at the door of the school…. Ho! slave, slave!

SOCRATES. Welcome! Strepsiades!

STREPSIADES. Welcome! Socrates! But first take this sack *(offers him a sack of flour)*; it is right to reward the master with some present. And my son, whom you took off lately, has he learnt this famous reasoning, tell me.

SOCRATES. He has learnt it.

STREPSIADES. What a good thing! Oh! thou divine Knavery!

SOCRATES. You will win just as many causes as you choose.

STREPSIADES. Even if I have borrowed before witnesses?

SOCRATES. So much the better, even if there are a thousand of ‘em!

STREPSIADES. Then I am going to shout with all my might. “Woe to the usurers, woe to their capital and their interest and their compound interest! You shall play me no more bad turns. My son is being taught there, his tongue is being sharpened into a double-edged weapon; he is my defender, the saviour of my house, the ruin of my foes! His poor father was crushed down with misfortune and he delivers him.” Go and call him to me quickly. Oh! my child! my dear little one! run forward to your father’s voice!

SOCRATES. Here he is.

STREPSIADES. Oh, my friend, my dearest friend!

SOCRATES. Take your son, and get you gone.

STREPSIADES. Oh, my son! oh! oh! what a pleasure to see your pallor! You are ready first to deny and then to contradict; ’tis as clear as noon. What a child of your country you are! How your lips quiver with the famous, “What have you to say now?” How well you know, I am certain, to put on the look of a victim, when it is you who are making both victims and dupes! and what a truly Attic glance! Come, ’tis for you to save me, seeing it is you who have ruined me.

PHIDIPPIDES. What is it you fear then?

STREPSIADES. The day of the old and the new.

PHIDIPPIDES. Is there then a day of the old and the new?

STREPSIADES. The day on which they threaten to pay deposit against me.

PHIDIPPIDES. Then so much the worse for those who have deposited! for ’tis not possible for one day to be two.

STREPSIADES. What?

PHIDIPPIDES. Why, undoubtedly, unless a woman can be both old and young at the same time.

STREPSIADES. But so runs the law.

PHIDIPPIDES. I think the meaning of the law is quite misunderstood.

STREPSIADES. What does it mean?

PHIDIPPIDES. Old Solon loved the people.

STREPSIADES. What has that to do with the old day and the new?

PHIDIPPIDES. He has fixed two days for the summons, the last day of the old moon and the first day of the new; but the deposits must only be paid on the first day of the new moon.

STREPSIADES. And why did he also name the last day of the old?

PHIDIPPIDES. So, my dear sir, that the debtors, being there the day before, might free themselves by mutual agreement, or that else, if not, the creditor might begin his action on the morning of the new moon.

STREPSIADES. Why then do the magistrates have the deposits paid on the last of the month and not the next day?

PHIDIPPIDES. I think they do as the gluttons do, who are the first to pounce upon the dishes. Being eager to carry off these deposits, they have them paid in a day too soon.

STREPSIADES. Splendid! Ah! poor brutes, who serve for food to us clever folk! You are only down here to swell the number, true blockheads, sheep for shearing, heap of empty pots! Hence I will sound the note of victory for my son and myself. “Oh! happy, Strepsiades! what cleverness is thine! and what a son thou hast here!” Thus my friends and my neighbours will say, jealous at seeing me gain all my suits. But come in, I wish to regale you first.

PASIAS *(to his witness)*. A man should never lend a single obolus. ’Twould be better to put on a brazen face at the outset than to get entangled in such matters. I want to see my money again and I bring you here to-day to attest the loan. I am going to make a foe of a neighbour; but, as long as I live, I do not wish my country to have to blush for me. Come, I am going to summon Strepsiades.

STREPSIADES. Who is this?

PASIAS. … for the old day and the new.

STREPSIADES. I call you to witness, that he has named two days. What do you want of me?

PASIAS. I claim of you the twelve minae, which you borrowed from me to buy the dapple-grey horse.

STREPSIADES. A horse! do you hear him? I, who detest horses, as is well known.

PASIAS. I call Zeus to witness, that you swore by the gods to return them to me.

STREPSIADES. Because at that time, by Zeus! Phidippides did not yet know the irrefutable argument.

PASIAS. Would you deny the debt on that account?

STREPSIADES. If not, what use is his science to me?

PASIAS. Will you dare to swear by the gods that you owe me nothing?

STREPSIADES. By which gods?

PASIAS. By Zeus, Hermes and Posidon!

STREPSIADES. Why, I would give three obols for the pleasure of swearing by them.

PASIAS. Woe upon you, impudent knave!

STREPSIADES. Oh! what a fine wine-skin you would make if flayed!

PASIAS. Heaven! he jeers at me!

STREPSIADES. It would hold six gallons easily.

PASIAS. By great Zeus! by all the gods! you shall not scoff at me with impunity.

STREPSIADES. Ah! how you amuse me with your gods! how ridiculous it

seems to a sage to hear Zeus invoked.

PASIAS. Your blasphemies will one day meet their reward. But, come, will you repay me my money, yes or no? Answer me, that I may go.

STREPSIADES. Wait a moment, I am going to give you a distinct answer. *(Goes indoors and returns immediately with a kneading-trough.)* PASIAS. What do you think he will do?

WITNESS. He will pay the debt.

STREPSIADES. Where is the man who demands money? Tell me, what is this?

PASIAS. Him? Why he is your kneading-trough.

STREPSIADES. And you dare to demand money of me, when you are so ignorant? I will not return an obolus to anyone who says *him* instead of *her* for a kneading-trough.

PASIAS. You will not repay?

STREPSIADES. Not if I know it. Come, an end to this, pack off as quick as you can.

PASIAS. I go, but, may I die, if it be not to pay my deposit for a summons.

STREPSIADES. Very well! 'Twill be so much more to the bad to add to the twelve minae. But truly it makes me sad, for I do pity a poor simpleton who says *him* for a kneading-trough.

AMYNIAS. Woe! ah woe is me!

STREPSIADES. Hold! who is this whining fellow? Can it be one of the gods of Carcinus?

AMYNIAS. Do you want to know who I am? I am a man of misfortune!

STREPSIADES. Get on your way then.

AMYNIAS. Oh! cruel god! Oh Fate, who hath broken the wheels of my chariot!

Oh, Pallas, thou hast undone me!

STREPSIADES. What ill has Tlepolemus done you?

AMYNIAS. Instead of jeering me, friend, make your son return me the money he has had of me; I am already unfortunate enough.

STREPSIADES. What money?

AMYNIAS. The money he borrowed of me.

STREPSIADES. You have indeed had misfortune, it seems to me.

AMYNIAS. Yes, by the gods! I have been thrown from a chariot.

STREPSIADES. Why then drivel as if you had fallen from an ass?

AMYNIAS. Am I drivelling because I demand my money?

STREPSIADES. No, no, you cannot be in your right senses.

AMYNIAS. Why?

STREPSIADES. No doubt your poor wits have had a shake.

AMYNIAS. But by Hermes! I will sue you at law, if you do not pay me.

STREPSIADES. Just tell me; do you think it is always fresh water that Zeus lets fall every time it rains, or is it always the same water that the sun pumps over the earth?

AMYNIAS. I neither know, nor care.

STREPSIADES. And actually you would claim the right to demand your money, when you know not a syllable of these celestial phenomena?

AMYNIAS. If you are short, pay me the interest, at any rate.

STREPSIADES. What kind of animal is interest?

AMYNIAS. What? Does not the sum borrowed go on growing, growing every

month, each day as the time slips by?

STREPSIADES. Well put. But do you believe there is more water in the sea now than there was formerly?

AMYNIAS. No, 'tis just the same quantity. It cannot increase.

STREPSIADES. Thus, poor fool, the sea, that receives the rivers, never grows, and yet you would have your money grow? Get you gone, away with you, quick! Ho! bring me the ox-goad!

AMYNIAS. Hither! you witnesses there!

STREPSIADES. Come, what are you waiting for? Will you not budge, old nag!

AMYNIAS. What an insult!

STREPSIADES. Unless you get a-trotting, I shall catch you and prick up your behind, you sorry packhorse! Ah! you start, do you? I was about to drive you pretty fast, I tell you — you and your wheels and your chariot!

CHORUS. Whither does the passion of evil lead! here is a perverse old man, who wants to cheat his creditors; but some mishap, which will speedily punish this rogue for his shameful schemings, cannot fail to overtake him from to-day. For a long time he has been burning to have his son know how to fight against all justice and right and to gain even the most iniquitous causes against his adversaries every one. I think this wish is going to be fulfilled. But mayhap, mayhap, he will soon wish his son were dumb rather!

STREPSIADES. Oh! oh! neighbours, kinsmen, fellow-citizens, help! help! to the rescue, I am being beaten! Oh! my head! oh! my jaw! Scoundrel! do you beat your own father!

PHIDIPPIDES. Yes, father, I do.

STREPSIADES. See! he admits he is beating me.

PHIDIPPIDES. Undoubtedly I do.

STREPSIADES. You villain, you parricide, you gallows-bird!

PHIDIPPIDES. Go on, repeat your epithets, call me a thousand other names, an it please you. The more you curse, the greater my amusement!

STREPSIADES. Oh! you infamous cynic!

PHIDIPPIDES. How fragrant the perfume breathed forth in your words.

STREPSIADES. Do you beat your own father?

PHIDIPPIDES. Aye, by Zeus! and I am going to show you that I do right in beating you.

STREPSIADES. Oh, wretch! can it be right to beat a father?

PHIDIPPIDES. I will prove it to you, and you shall own yourself vanquished.

STREPSIADES. Own myself vanquished on a point like this?

PHIDIPPIDES. 'Tis the easiest thing in the world. Choose whichever of the two reasonings you like.

STREPSIADES. Of which reasonings?

PHIDIPPIDES. The Stronger and the Weaker.

STREPSIADES. Miserable fellow! Why, 'tis I who had you taught how to refute what is right, and now you would persuade me it is right a son should beat his father.

PHIDIPPIDES. I think I shall convince you so thoroughly that, when you have heard me, you will not have a word to say.

STREPSIADES. Well, I am curious to hear what you have to say.

CHORUS. Consider well, old man, how you can best triumph over him. His brazenness shows me that he thinks himself sure of his case; he has some argument which gives him nerve. Note the confidence in his look! But how did the fight begin? tell the Chorus; you cannot help doing that much.

STREPSIADES. I will tell you what was the start of the quarrel. At the end of the meal you wot of, I bade him take his lyre and sing me the air of Simonides,

which tells of the fleece of the ram. He replied bluntly, that it was stupid, while drinking, to play the lyre and sing, like a woman when she is grinding barley.

PHIDIPPIDES. Why, by rights I ought to have beaten and kicked you the very moment you told me to sing!

STREPSIADES. That is just how he spoke to me in the house, furthermore he added, that Simonides was a detestable poet. However, I mastered myself and for a while said nothing. Then I said to him, 'At least, take a myrtle branch and recite a passage from Aeschylus to me.'— 'For my own part,' he at once replied, 'I look upon Aeschylus as the first of poets, for his verses roll superbly; 'tis nothing but incoherence, bombast and turgidness.' Yet still I smothered my wrath and said, 'Then recite one of the famous pieces from the modern poets.' Then he commenced a piece in which Euripides shows, oh! horror! a brother, who violates his own uterine sister. Then I could no longer restrain myself, and attacked him with the most injurious abuse; naturally he retorted; hard words were hurled on both sides, and finally he sprang at me, broke my bones, bore me to earth, strangled and started killing me!

PHIDIPPIDES. I was right. What! not praise Euripides, the greatest of our poets!

STREPSIADES. He the greatest of our poets! Ah! if I but dared to speak! but the blows would rain upon me harder than ever.

PHIDIPPIDES. Undoubtedly, and rightly too.

STREPSIADES. Rightly! oh! what impudence! to me, who brought you up! when you could hardly lisp, I guessed what you wanted. If you said *broo, broo*, well, I brought you your milk; if you asked for *mam mam*, I gave you bread; and you had no sooner said, *caca*, than I took you outside and held you out. And just now, when you were strangling me, I shouted, I bellowed that I would let all go; and you, you scoundrel, had not the heart to take me outside, so that here, though almost choking, I was compelled to ease myself.

CHORUS. Young men, your hearts must be panting with impatience. What is Phidippides going to say? If, after such conduct, he proves he has done well, I would not give an obolus for the hide of old men. Come, you, who know how to brandish and hurl the keen shafts of the new science, find a way to convince us, give your language an appearance of truth.

PHIDIPPIDES. How pleasant it is to know these clever new inventions and to be able to defy the established laws! When I thought only about horses, I was not able to string three words together without a mistake, but now that the master has altered and improved me and that I live in this world of subtle thought, of reasoning and of meditation, I count on being able to prove satisfactorily that I have done well to thrash my father.

STREPSIADES. Mount your horse! By Zeus! I would rather defray the keep of a four-in-hand team than be battered with blows.

PHIDIPPIDES. I revert to what I was saying when you interrupted me. And first, answer me, did you beat me in my childhood?

STREPSIADES. Why, assuredly, for your good and in your own best interest.

PHIDIPPIDES. Tell me, is it not right, that in turn I should beat you for your good? since it is for a man's own best interest to be beaten. What! must your body be free of blows, and not mine? am I not free-born too? the children are to weep and the fathers go free?

STREPSIADES. But…

PHIDIPPIDES. You will tell me, that according to the law, 'tis the lot of children to be beaten. But I reply that the old men are children twice over and that it is far more fitting to chastise them than the young, for there is less excuse for their faults.

STREPSIADES. But the law nowhere admits that fathers should be treated thus.

PHIDIPPIDES. Was not the legislator who carried this law a man like you and me? In those days he got men to believe him; then why should not I too have the right to establish for the future a new law, allowing children to beat their fathers in turn? We make you a present of all the blows which were received before this law, and admit that you thrashed us with impunity. But look how the cocks and other animals fight with their fathers; and yet what difference is there betwixt them and ourselves, unless it be that they do not propose decrees?

STREPSIADES. But if you imitate the cocks in all things, why don't you scratch up the dunghill, why don't you sleep on a perch?

PHIDIPPIDES. That has no bearing on the case, good sir; Socrates would find no connection, I assure you.

STREPSIADES. Then do not beat at all, for otherwise you have only yourself to blame afterwards.

PHIDIPPIDES. What for?

STREPSIADES. I have the right to chastise you, and you to chastise your son, if you have one.

PHIDIPPIDES. And if I have not, I shall have cried in vain, and you will die laughing in my face.

STREPSIADES. What say you, all here present? It seems to me that he is right, and I am of opinion that they should be accorded their right. If we think wrongly, 'tis but just we should be beaten.

PHIDIPPIDES. Again, consider this other point.

STREPSIADES. 'Twill be the death of me.

PHIDIPPIDES. But you will certainly feel no more anger because of the blows I have given you.

STREPSIADES. Come, show me what profit I shall gain from it.

PHIDIPPIDES. I shall beat my mother just as I have you.

STREPSIADES. What do you say? what's that you say? Hah! this is far worse still.

PHIDIPPIDES. And what if I prove to you by our school reasoning, that one ought to beat one's mother?

STREPSIADES. Ah! if you do that, then you will only have to throw yourself along with Socrates and his reasoning, into the Barathrum. Oh! Clouds! all our troubles emanate from you, from you, to whom I entrusted myself, body and soul.

CHORUS. No, you alone are the cause, because you have pursued the path of evil.

STREPSIADES. Why did you not say so then, instead of egging on a poor ignorant old man?

CHORUS. We always act thus, when we see a man conceive a passion for what is evil; we strike him with some terrible disgrace, so that he may learn to fear the gods.

STREPSIADES. Alas! oh Clouds! 'tis hard indeed, but 'tis just! I ought not to have cheated my creditors…. But come, my dear son, come with me to take vengeance on this wretched Chaerephon and on Socrates, who have deceived us both.

PHIDIPPIDES. I shall do nothing against our masters.

STREPSIADES. Oh! show some reverence for ancestral Zeus!

PHIDIPPIDES. Mark him and his ancestral Zeus! What a fool you are! Does any such being as Zeus exist?

STREPSIADES. Why, assuredly.

PHIDIPPIDES. No, a thousand times no! The ruler of the world is the Whirlwind, that has unseated Zeus.

STREPSIADES. He has not dethroned him. I believed it, because of this whirligig here. Unhappy wretch that I am! I have taken a piece of clay to be a god.

PHIDIPPIDES. Very well! Keep your stupid nonsense for your own consumption. *(Exit.)* STREPSIADES. Oh! what madness! I had lost my reason when I threw over the gods through Socrates' seductive phrases. Oh! good Hermes, do not destroy me in your wrath. Forgive me; their babbling had driven me crazy. Be my councillor. Shall I pursue them at law or shall I…? Order and I obey. — You are right, no lawsuit; but up! let us burn down the home of those praters. Here, Xanthias, here! take a ladder, come forth and arm yourself with an axe; now mount upon the school, demolish the roof, if you love your master, and may the house fall in upon them, Ho! bring me a blazing torch! There is more

than one of them, arch-impostors as they are, on whom I am determined to have vengeance.

A DISCIPLE. Oh! oh!

STREPSIADES. Come, torch, do your duty! Burst into full flame!

DISCIPLE. What are you up to?

STREPSIADES. What am I up to? Why, I am entering upon a subtle argument with the beams of the house.

SECOND DISCIPLE. Hullo! hullo! who is burning down our house?

STREPSIADES. The man whose cloak you have appropriated.

SECOND DISCIPLE. But we are dead men, dead men!

STREPSIADES. That is just exactly what I hope, unless my axe plays me false, or I fall and break my neck.

SOCRATES. Hi! you fellow on the roof, what are you doing up there?

STREPSIADES. I traverse the air and contemplate the sun.

SOCRATES. Ah! ah! woe is upon me! I am suffocating!

CHAEREPHON. Ah! you insulted the gods! Ah! you studied the face of the moon! Chase them, strike and beat them down! Forward! they have richly deserved their fate — above all, by reason of their blasphemies.

CHORUS. So let the Chorus file off the stage. Its part is played.

THE WASPS

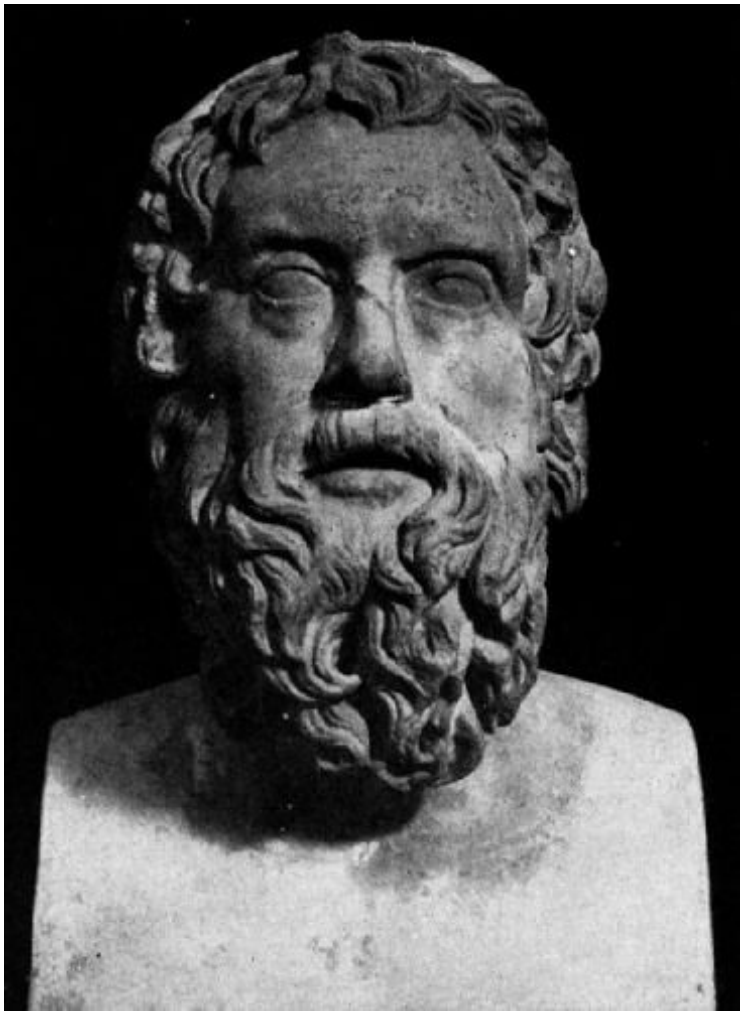
Anonymous translation for the Athenian Society, London, 1912

The Wasps was produced at the Lenaia festival in 422 BC, at a time when Athens was enjoying a brief respite from The Peloponnesian War following a one year truce with Sparta. As in his other early plays, Aristophanes pokes satirical fun at the demagogue Cleon, but this time he also ridicules the law-courts, which was one of the Athenian institutions that provided Cleon with his power-base.

Two years before the performance of *The Wasps*, Athens had obtained a significant victory against its rival, Sparta, in the Battle of Sphacteria. Most Athenians credited Cleon with this victory and he was then at the height of his power. Constitutionally, supreme power lay with the *demos* as voters in the assembly and as jurors in the courts, but they could be manipulated by demagogues like Cleon, who were skilled in oratory and supported by networks of informers. Cleon had succeeded Pericles as the dominant speaker in the assembly and increasingly he was able to manipulate the courts for political and personal ends, especially in the prosecution of public officials for mismanagement of their duties. Jurors had to be citizens over the age of thirty and a corps of six thousand was enrolled at the beginning of each year, forming a conspicuous presence about town in their short brown cloaks, with wooden staves in their hands. Jurors came under the sway of litigious politicians like Cleon who provided them with cases to try and who were influential in persuading the assembly to keep up their pay. However it is not necessarily true that Cleon was exploiting the system for venal or corrupt reasons, as argued in *The Wasps*. Aristophanes' plays promote conservative values and they support an honourable peace with Sparta whereas Cleon was a radical democrat and a leader of the pro-war faction.

The play begins with a strange scene, where a large net has been spread over a house, the entry is barricaded and two slaves are sleeping in the street outside. A third man is positioned at the top of an exterior wall with a view into the inner courtyard, but he too is asleep. The two slaves wake and we learn from their banter that they are keeping guard over a 'monster'. The man asleep above them is their master and the monster is his father, who has an unusual disease of being addicted to the law court. His name is Philocleon (which suggests that he might

be addicted to Cleon) and his son's name is the very opposite of this — Bdelycleon. The symptoms of the old man's addiction are described for us and they include irregular sleep, obsessional thinking, paranoia, poor hygiene and hoarding.



A Roman bust of the playwright

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INTRODUCTION

"This Comedy, which was produced by its Author the year after the performance of 'The Clouds,' may be taken as in some sort a companion picture to that piece. Here the satire is directed against the passion of the Athenians for the excitement of the law-courts, as in the former its object was the new philosophy. And as the younger generation — the modern school of thought — were there the subjects of the caricature, so here the older citizens, who took their seats in court as jurymen day by day, to the neglect of their private affairs and the encouragement of a litigious disposition, appear in their turn in the mirror which the satirist holds up."

There are only two characters of any importance to the action — Philocleon ('friend of Cleon') and his son Bdelycleon ('enemy of Cleon'). The plot is soon told. Philocleon is a bigoted devotee of the malady of litigiousness so typical of his countrymen and an enthusiastic attendant at the Courts in his capacity of 'dicast' or juryman. Bdelycleon endeavours to persuade his father by every means in his power to change this unsatisfactory manner of life for something nobler and more profitable; but all in vain. As a last resource he keeps his father a prisoner indoors, so that he cannot attend the tribunals.

The old man tries to escape, and these attempts are conceived in the wildest vein of extravaganza. He endeavours to get out by the chimney, pretending he is "only the smoke"; and all hands rush to clap a cover on the chimney-top, and a big stone on that. He slips through a hole in the tiles, and sits on the roof, pretending to be "only a sparrow"; and they have to set a net to catch him. Then the Chorus of Wasps, representing Philocleon''s fellow 'dicasts,' appear on the scene to rescue him. A battle royal takes place on the stage; the Wasps, with their formidable stings, trying to storm the house, while the son and his retainers defend their position with desperate courage. Finally the assailants are repulsed, and father and son agree upon a compromise. Bdelycleon promises, on condition that his father gives up attending the public trails, to set up a mock tribunal for him in his own house.

Presently the theft of a Sicilian cheese by the house-dog Labes gives the old fellow an opportunity of exercising his judicial functions. Labes is duly arraigned and witnesses examines. But alas! Philocleon inadvertently casts his vote for the defendant's *acquittal*, the first time in his life "such a thing has ever occurred," and the old man nearly dies of vexation.

At this point follows the 'Parabasis,' or Author's personal address to the audience, after which the concluding portion of the play has little connection

with the main theme. This is a fault, according to modern ideas, common to many of these Comedies, but it is especially marked in this particular instance. The final part might almost be a separate play, under the title perhaps of ‘The dicast turned gentleman,’ and relates various ridiculous mistakes and laughable blunders committed by Philocleon, who, having given up his attendance on the law-courts, has set up for playing a part in polite society.

The drama, as was very often the case, takes its title from the Chorus — a band of old men dressed up as wasps, who acrimonious, stinging, exasperated temper is meant to typify the character fostered among Athenian citizens by excessive addiction to forensic business.

Racine, in the only comedy he attempted, ‘Les Plaideurs,’ borrows the incident of the mock trial of the house-dog, amplifying and adding further diverting features.

Perhaps ‘The Wasps’ is the least amusing of all our Author’s pieces which have come down to us — at any rate to a modern reader. The theme of its satire, the litigious spirit of the Athenians, is after all purely local and temporary, while the fun often strikes us as thin and forced. Schlegel writes in his ‘Dramatic Literature’: “The subject is too limited, the folly it ridicules appears a disease of too singular a description, without a sufficient universality of application, and the action is too much drawn out.”

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PHILOCLEON, a Dicast.
BDELYCLEON, his Son.
SOSIAS, House-servant of Philocleon.
XANTHIAS, House-servant of Philocleon.
BOYS.
A DOG.
A BAKER'S WIFE.
ACCUSER.
CHORUS OF ELDERS, costumed as Wasps.

SCENE: Philocleon's house at Athens.

THE WASPS

SOSIAS. Why, Xanthias! what are you doing, wretched man?

XANTHIAS. I am teaching myself how to rest; I have been awake and on watch the whole night.

SOSIAS. So you want to earn trouble for your ribs, eh? Don't you know what sort of an animal we are guarding here?

XANTHIAS. Aye indeed! but I want to put my cares to sleep for a while.

SOSIAS. Beware what you do. I too feel soft sleep spreading over my eyes. Resist it, for you must be as mad as a Corybant if you fall asleep.

XANTHIAS. No! 'Tis Bacchus who lulls me off.

SOSIAS. Then you serve the same god as myself. Just now a heavy slumber settled on my eyelids like a hostile Mede; A nodded and, faith! I had a wondrous dream.

XANTHIAS. Indeed! and so had I. A dream such as I never had before. But first tell me yours.

SOSIAS. Methinks I saw an eagle, a gigantic bird, descend upon the market-place; it seized a brazen buckler with its talons and bore it away into the highest heavens; then I saw 'twas Cleonymus had thrown it away.

XANTHIAS. This Cleonymus is a riddle worth propounding among guests. How can one and the same animal have cast away his buckler both on land, in the sky and at sea?

SOSIAS. Alas! what ill does such a dream portend for me?

XANTHIAS. Rest undisturbed! An it please the gods, no evil will befall you.

SOSIAS. Nevertheless, 'tis a fatal omen when a man throws away his weapons. But what was your dream? Let me hear.

XANTHIAS. Oh! it is a dream of high import. It has reference to the hull of the State; to nothing less.

SOSIAS. Tell it me quickly; show me its very keel.

XANTHIAS. In my first slumber I thought I saw sheep, wearing cloaks and carrying staves, met in assembly on the Pnyx; a rapacious whale was haranguing them and screaming like a pig that is being grilled.

SOSIAS. Faugh! faugh!

XANTHIAS. What's the matter?

SOSIAS. Enough, enough, spare me. Your dream stinks vilely of old leather.

XANTHIAS. Then this scoundrelly whale seized a balance and set to weighing ox-fat.

SOSIAS. Alas! 'tis our poor Athenian people, whom this accursed beast wished to cut up and despoil of their fat.

XANTHIAS. Seated on the ground close to it, I saw Theorus, who had the head of a crow. The Alcibiades said to me in his lisping way, "Do you thee? Theoruth hath a crow'th head."

SOSIAS. Ah! 'twas very well lisped indeed!

XANTHIAS. This is might strange; Theorus turning into a crow!

SOSIAS. No, it is glorious.

XANTHIAS. Why?

SOSIAS. Why? He was a man and now he has suddenly become a crow; does it not foretoken that he will take his flight from here and go to the crows?

XANTHIAS. Interpreting dreams so aptly certainly deserves two obols.

SOSIAS. Come, I must explain the matter to the spectators. But first a few words of preamble: expect nothing very high-flown from us, nor any jests stolen from Megara; we have no slaves, who throw baskets of nuts to the spectators,

nor any Heracles to be robbed of his dinner, nor is Euripides loaded with contumely; and despite the happy chance that gave Cleon his fame we shall not go out of our way to belabour him again. Our little subject is not wanting in sense; it is well within your capacity and at the same time cleverer than many vulgar Comedies. — We have a master of great renown, who is now sleeping up there on the other story. He has bidden us keep guard over his father, whom he has locked in, so that he may not go out. This father has a curious complaint; not one of you could hit upon or guess it, if I did not tell you. — Well then, try! I hear Amynias, the son of Pronapus, over there, saying, "He is addicted to gambling."

XANTHIAS. He's wrong! He is imputing his own malady to others.

SOSIAS. No, yet love is indeed the principal part of his disease. Ah! here is Sosias telling Dercylus, "He loves drinking."

XANTHIAS. Not at all! The love of wine is the complaint of good men.

SOSIAS. "Well then," says Nicostratus of the Scambonian deme, "he either loves sacrifices or else strangers."

XANTHIAS. Ah! great gods! no, he is not fond of strangers, Nicostratus, for he who says "Philoxenus" means a dirty fellow.

SOSIAS. 'Tis mere waste of time, you will not find it out. If you want to know it, keep silence! I will tell you our master's complaint: of all men, it is he who is fondest of the Heliaea. Thus, to be judging is his hobby, and he groans if he is not sitting on the first seat. He does not close an eye at night, and if he dozes off for an instant his mind flies instantly to the clepsydra. He is so accustomed to hold the balloting pebble, that he awakes with his three fingers pinched together as if he were offering incense to the new moon. If he sees scribbled on some doorway, "How charming is Demos, the son of Pyrilampes!" he will write beneath it, "How charming is Cemos!" His cock crowed one evening; said he, "He has had money from the accused to awaken me too late." As soon as he rises from supper he bawls for his shoes and away he rushes down there before dawn to sleep beforehand, glued fast to the column like an oyster. He is a merciless judge, never failing to draw the convicting line and return home with his nails full of wax like a bumble-bee. Fearing he might run short of pebbles he keeps enough at home to cover a sea-beach, so that he may have the means of

recording his sentence. Such is his madness, and all advice is useless; he only judges the more each day. So we keep him under lock and key, to prevent his going out; for his son is broken-hearted over this mania. At first he tried him with gentleness, wanted to persuade him to wear the cloak no longer, to go out no more; unable to convince him, he had him bathed and purified according to the ritual without any greater success, and then handed him over the the Corybantes; but the old man escaped them, and carrying off the kettle-drum, rushed right into the midst of the Heliasts. As Cybelé could do nothing with her rites, his son took him again to Aegina and forcibly made him lie one night in the temple of Asclepius, the God of Healing, but before daylight there he was to be seen at the gate of the tribunal. Since then we let him go out no more, but he escaped us by the drains or by the skylights, so we stuffed up every opening with old rags and made all secure; then he drove short sticks into the wall and sprang from rung to rung like a magpie. Now we have stretched nets all round the court and we keep watch and ward. The old man's name is Philocleon, 'tis the best name he could have, and the son is called Bdelycleon, for he is a man very fit to cure an insolent fellow of his boasting.

BDELYCLEON. Xanthias! Sosias! Are you asleep?

XANTHIAS. Oh! oh!

SOSIAS. What is the matter?

XANTHIAS. Why, Bdelycleon is rising.

BDELYCLEON. Will neither of you come here? My father has got into the stove-chamber and is ferreting about like a rat in his hole. Take care he does not escape through the bath drain. You there, put all your weight against the door.

SOSIAS. Aye, aye, master.

BDELYCLEON. By Zeus! what is that noise in the chimney? Hullo! who are you?

PHILOCLEON. I am the smoke going up.

BDELYCLEON. Smoke? smoke of what wood?

PHILOCLEON. Of fig-wood.

BDELYCLEON. Ah! ‘this the most acrid of all. But you shall not get out. Where is the chimney cover? Come down again. Now, up with another cross-bar. Now look out some fresh dodge. But am I not the most unfortunate of men? Henceforward, I shall only be called the son of the smoky old man. Slave, hold the door stoutly, throw your weight upon it, come, put heart into the work. I will come and help you. Watch both lock and bolt. Take care he does not gnaw through the peg.

PHILOCLEON. What are you dong, you wretches? Let me go out; it is imperative that I go and judge, or Dracontides will be acquitted.

BDELYCLEON. What a dreadful calamity for you!

PHILOCLEON. Once at Delphi, the god, whom I was consulting, foretold, that if an accused man escaped me, I should die of consumption.

BDELYCLEON. Apollo, the Saviour, what a prophecy!

PHILOCLEON. Ah! I beseech you, if you do not want my death, let me go.

BDELYCLEON. No, Philocleon, no never, by Posidon!

PHILOCLEON. Well then, I shall gnaw through the net with my teeth.

BDELYCLEON. But you have no teeth.

PHILOCLEON. Oh! you rascal, how can I kill you? How? Give me a sword, quick, or a conviction tablet.

BDELYCLEON. Our friend is planning some great crime.

PHILOCLEON. No, by Zeus! but I want to go and sell my ass and its panniers, for ‘this the first of the month.

BDELYCLEON. Could I not sell it just as well?

PHILOCLEON. Not as well as I could.

BDELYCLEON. No, but better. Come, bring it here, bring it here by all means — if you can.

XANTHIAS. What a clever excuse he has found now! What cunning to get you to let him go out!

BDELYCLEON. Yes, but I have not swallowed the hook; I scented the trick. I will no in and fetch the ass, so that the old man may not point his weapons that way again…. Stupid old ass, are you weeping because you are going to be sold? Come, go a bit quicker. Why, what are you moaning and groaning for? You might be carrying another Odysseus.

XANTHIAS. Why, certainly, so he is! someone has crept beneath his belly.

BDELYCLEON. Who, who? Let us see.

XANTHIAS. 'Tis he.

BDELYCLEON. What does this mean? Who are you? Come, speak!

PHILOCLEON. I am Nobody.

BDELYCLEON. Nobody? Of what country?

PHILOCLEON. Of Ithaca, son of Apodrasippides.

BDELYCLEON. Ha! Mister Nobody, you will not laugh presently. Pull him out quick! Ah! the wretch, where has be crept to? Does he not resemble a she-ass to the life?

PHILOCLEON. If you do not leave me in peace, I shall commence proceedings.

BDELYCLEON. And what will the suit be about?

PHILOCLEON. The shade of an ass.

BDELYCLEON. You are a poor man of very little wit, but thoroughly brazen.

PHILOCLEON. A poor man! Ah! by Zeus! you know not now what I am worth; but you will know when you disembowel the old Heliast's money bag.

BDELYCLEON. Come, get back indoors, both you and your ass.

PHILOCLEON. Oh! my brethren of the tribunal! oh! Cleon! to the rescue!

BDELYCLEON. Go and bawl in there under lock and key. And you there, pile plenty of stones against the door, thrust the bolt home into the staple, and to keep this beam in its place roll that great mortar against it. Quick's the word.

SOSIAS. Oh! my god! whence did this brick fall on me?

XANTHIAS. Perhaps a rat loosened it.

SOSIAS. A rat? 'tis surely our gutter-judge, who has crept beneath the tiles of the roof.

XANTHIAS. Ah! woe to us! there he is, he has turned into a sparrow; he will be flying off. Where is the net? where? pschit! pschit! get back!

BDELYCLEON. Ah! by Zeus! I would rather have to guard Scioné than such a father.

SOSIAS. And how that we have driven him in thoroughly and he can no longer escape without our knowledge, can we not have a few winks of sleep, no matter how few?

BDELYCLEON. Why, wretch! the other jurymen will be here almost directly to summon my father!

SOSIAS. Why, 'tis scarcely dawn yet!

BDELYCLEON. Ah, they must have risen late to-day. Generally it is the middle of the night when they come to fetch him. They arrive here, carrying lanterns in their hands and singing the charming old verses of Phrynichus' "Sidonian Women"; 'tis their way of calling him.

SOSIAS. Well, if need be, we will chase them off with stones.

BDELYCLEON. What! you dare to speak so? Why, this class of old men, if irritated, becomes as terrible as a swarm of wasps. They carry below their loins the sharpest of stings, with which to sting their foe; they shout and leap and their stings burn like so many sparks.

SOSIAS. Have no fear! If I can find stones to throw into this nest of jurymen-wasps, I shall soon have them cleared off.

CHORUS. March on, advance boldly and bravely! Comias, your feet are dragging; once you were as tough as a dog-skin strap and now even Charinades walks better than you. Ha! Strymodorus of Conthylé, you best of mates, where is Euergides and where is Chales of Phyla? Ha, ha, bravo! there you are, the last of the lads with whom we mounted guard together at Byzantium. Do you remember how, one night, prowling round, we noiselessly stole the kneading-trough of a baker's-wife; we split it in two and cooked our green-stuff with it. — But let us hasten, for the case of the Laches comes on to-day, and they all say he has embezzled a pot of money. Hence Cleon, our protector, advised us yesterday to come early and with a three days' stock of fiery rage so as to chastise him for his crimes. Let us hurry, comrades, before it is light; come, let us search every nook with our lanterns to see whether those who wish us ill have not set us some trap.

BOY. Ah! here is mud! Father, take care!

CHORUS. Pick up a blade of straw and trim the lamp of your lantern.

BOY. No, I can trim it quite well with my finger.

CHORUS. Why do you pull out the wick, you little dolt? Oil is scarce, and 'tis not you who suffer when it has to be paid for. *(Strikes him.)*

BOY. If you teach us again with your fists, we shall put out the lamps and go home; then you will have no light and will squatter about in the mud like ducks in the dark.

CHORUS. I know how to punish other offenders bigger than you. But I think I am treading in some mud. Oh! 'tis certain it will rain in torrents for four days at least; look, what thieves are in our lamps; that is always a sign of heavy rain; but the rain and the north wind will be good for the crops that are still standing…. Why, what can have happened to our mate, who lives here? Why does he not come to join our party? There used to be no need to haul him in our wake, for he would march at our head singing the verses of Phrynichus; he was a lover of singing. Should we not, friends, make a halt here and sign to call him out? The charm of my voice will fetch him out, if he hears it.

Why does the old man not show himself before the door? why does he not answer? Has he lost his shoes? has he stubbed his toe in the dark and thus got a swollen ankle? Perhaps he has a tumour in his groin. He was the hardest of us

all; he alone *never* allowed himself to be moved. If anyone tried to move him, he would lower his head, saying, "You might just as well try to boil a stone." But I bethink me, an accused ma escaped us yesterday through his false pretence that he loved Athens and had been the first to unfold the Samian plot. Perhaps his acquittal has so distressed Philocleon that he is abed with fever — he is quite capable of such a thing. — Friend, arise, do not thus vex your hear, but forget your wrath. Today we have to judge a man made wealthy by treason, one of those who set Thrace free; we have to prepare him a funeral urn … so march on, my boy, get a-going.

BOY. Father, would you give me something if I asked for it?

CHORUS. Assuredly, my child, but tell me what nice thing do you want me to buy you? A set of knuckle-bones, I suppose.

BOY. No, dad, I prefer figs; they are better.

CHORUS. No, by Zeus! even if you were to hang yourself with vexation.

BOY. Well then, I will lead you no father.

CHORUS. With my small pay, I am obliged to buy bread, wood, stew; and now you ask me for figs!

BOY. But, father, if the Archon should not form a court to-day, how are we to buy our dinner? Have you some good hope to offer us or merely "Hellé's sacred waves"?

CHORUS. Alas! alas! I have not a notion how we shall dine.

BOY. Oh! my poor mother! why did you let me see this day?

CHORUS. Oh! my little wallet! you seem like to be a mere useless ornament!

BOY. 'Tis our destiny to groan.

PHILOCLEON. My friends, I have long been pining away while listening to you from my window, but I absolutely know not what do do. I am detained here, because I have long wanted to go with you to the law court and do all the harm I can. Oh! Zeus! cause the peals of they thunder to roll, change me quickly into

smoke or make me into a Proxenides, a perfect braggart, like the son of Sellus. Oh, King of Heaven! hesitate not to grant me this favour, pity my misfortune or else may thy dazzling lightning instantly reduce me to ashes; then carry me hence, and may thy breath hurl me into some burning pickle or turn me into one of the stones on which the votes are counted.

CHORUS. Who is it detains you and shuts you in? Speak, for you are talking to friends.

PHILOCLEON. 'Tis my son. But no bawling, he is there in front asleep; lower your voice.

CHORUS. But, poor fellow, what is his aim? what is his object?

PHILOCLEON. My friends, he will not have me judge nor do anyone any ill, but he wants me to stay at home and enjoy myself, and I will not.

CHORUS. This wretch, this Demolochocleon dares to say such odious things, just because you tell the truth about our navy!

PHILOCLEON. He would not have dared, had he not been a conspirator.

CHORUS. Meanwhile, you must devise some new dodge, so that you can come down here without his knowledge.

PHILOCLEON. But what? Try to find some way. For myself, I am ready for anything, so much do I burn to run along the tiers of the tribunal with my voting-pebble in my hand.

CHORUS. There is surely some hole through which you could manage to squeeze from within, and escape dressed in rags, like the crafty Odysseus.

PHILOCLEON. Everything is sealed fast; not so much as a gnat could get through. Think of some other plan; there is no possible hold of escape.

CHORUS. Do you recall how, when you were with the army at the taking of Naxos, you descended so readily from the top of the wall by means of the spits you have stolen?

PHILOCLEON. I remember that well enough, but what connection is there with

present circumstances? I was young, clever at thieving, I had all my strength, none watched over me, and I could run off without fear. But to-day men-at-arms are placed at every outlet to watch me, and two of them are lying in wait for me at this very door armed with spits, just as folk lie in wait for a cat that has stolen a piece of meat.

CHORUS. Come, discover some way as quick as possible. Here is the dawn come, my dear little friend.

PHILOCLEON. The best way is to gnaw through the net. Oh! goddess, who watches over the nets, forgive me for making a hole in this one.

CHORUS. 'Tis acting like a man eager for his safety. Get your jaws to work!

PHILOCLEON. There! 'tis gnawed through! But no shouting! let Bdelycleon notice nothing!

CHORUS. Have no fear, have no fear! if he breathes a syllable, 'twill be to bruise his own knuckles; he will have to fight to defend his own head. We shall teach him not to insult the mysteries of the goddesses. But fasten a rope to the window, tie it around your body and let yourself down to the ground, with your heart bursting with the fury of Diopithes.

PHILOCLEON. But if these notice it and want to fish me up and drag me back into the house, what will you do? Tell me that.

CHORUS. We shall call up the full strength of out courage to your aid.
That is what we will do.

PHILOCLEON. I trust myself to you and risk the danger. If misfortune overtakes me, take away my body, bathe it with your tears and bury it beneath the bar of the tribunal.

CHORUS. Nothing will happen to you, rest assured. Come friend, have courage and let yourself slide down while you invoke your country's gods.

PHILOCLEON. Oh! mighty Lycus! noble hero and my neighbour, thou, like myself, takest pleasure in the tears and the groans of the accused. If thou art come to live near the tribunal, 'tis with the express design of hearing them incessantly; thou alone of all the heroes hast wished to remain among those who

weep. Have pity on me and save him, who lives close to thee; I swear I will never make water, never, nor relieve my belly with a fart against the railing of thy statue.

BDELYCLEON. Ho there! ho! get up!

SOSIAS. What's the matter?

BDELYCLEON. Methought I heard talking close to me.

SOSIAS. Is the old man at it again, escaping through some loophole?

BDELYCLEON. No, by Zeus! no, but he is letting himself down by a rope.

SOSIAS. Ha, rascal! what are you doing there? You shall not descend.

BDELYCLEON. Mount quick to the other window, strike him with the boughs that hang over the entrance; perchance he will turn back when he feels himself being thrashed.

PHILOCLEON. To the rescue! all you, who are going to have lawsuits this year — Smicythion, Tisiades, Chremon and Pheredipnus. 'Tis now or never, before they force me to return, that you must help.

CHORUS. Why do we delay to let loose that fury, that is so terrible, when our nests are attacked? I feel my angry sting is stiffening, that sharp sting, with which we punish our enemies. Come, children, cast your cloaks to the winds, run, shout, tell Cleon what is happening, that he may march against this foe to our city, who deserves death, since he proposes to prevent the trial of lawsuits.

BDELYCLEON. Friends, listen to the truth, instead of bawling.

CHORUS. By Zeus! we will shout to heaven and never forsake our friend.
Why, this is intolerable, 'tis manifest tyranny. Oh! citizens, oh!
Theorus, the enemy of the gods! and all you flatterers, who rule us!
come to our aid.

XANTHIAS. By Heracles! they have stings. Do you see them, master?

BDELYCLEON. 'Twas with these weapons that they killed Philippus the son of

Gorgias when he was put on trial.

CHORUS. And you too shall die. Turn yourselves this way, all, with your stings out for attack and throw yourselves upon him in good and serried order, and swelled up with wrath and rage. Let him learn to know the sort of foes he has dared to irritate.

XANTHIAS. The fight will be fast and furious, by great Zeus! I tremble at the sight of their stings.

CHORUS. Let this man go, unless you want to envy the tortoise his hard shell.

PHILOCLEON. Come, my dear companions, wasps with relentless hearts, fly against him, animated with your fury. Sting him in the back, in his eyes and on his fingers.

BDELYCLEON. Midas, Phryx, Masyntias, here! Come and help. Seize this man and hand him over to no one, otherwise you shall starve to death in chains. Fear nothing, I have often heard the crackling of fig-leaves in the fire.

CHORUS. If you won't let him go, I shall bury this sting in your body.

PHILOCLEON. Oh, Cecrops, mighty hero with the tail of a dragon! Seest thou how these barbarians ill-use me — me, who have many a time made them weep a full bushel of tears?

CHORUS. Is not old age filled with cruel ills? What violence these two slaves offer to their old master! they have forgotten all bygones, the fur-coats and the jackets and the caps he bought for them; in winter he watched that their feet should not get frozen. And only see them now; there is no gentleness in their look nor any recollection of the slippers of other days.

PHILOCLEON. Will you let me go, you accursed animal? Don't you remember the day when I surprised you stealing the grapes; I tied you to an olive-tree and I cut open your bottom with such vigorous lashes that folks thought you had been pedicated. Get away, you are ungrateful. But let go of me, and you too, before my son comes up.

CHORUS. You shall repay us for all this and 'twill not be long first.
Tremble at our ferocious glance; you shall taste our just anger.

BDELYCLEON. Strike! strike, Xanthias! Drive these wasps away from the house.

XANTHIAS. That's just what I am doing; but do you smoke them out thoroughly too.

SOSIAS. You will not go? The plague seize you! Will you not clear off? Xanthias, strike them with your stick!

XANTHIAS. And you, to smoke them out better, throw Aeschinus, the son of Selartius, on the fire. Ah! we were bound to drive you off in the end.

BDELYCLEON. Eh! by Zeus! you would not have put them to flight so easily if they had fed on the verses of Philocles.

CHORUS. It is clear to all the poor that tyranny has attacked us sorely. Proud emulator of Amynias, you, who only take pleasure in doing ill, see how you are preventing us from obeying the laws of the city; you do not even seek a pretext or any plausible excuse, but claim to rule alone.

BDELYCLEON. Hold! A truce to all blows and brawling! Had we not better confer together and come to some understanding?

CHORUS. Confer with you, the people's foe! with you, a royalist, the accomplice of Brasidas! with you, who wear woollen fringes on your cloak and let your beard grow!

BDELYCLEON. Ah! it were better to separate altogether from my father than to steer my boat daily through such stormy seas!

CHORUS. Oh! you have but reached the parsley and the rue, to use the common saying. What you are suffering is nothing! but welcome the hour when the advocate shall adduce all these same arguments against you and shall summon your accomplices to give witness.

BDELYCLEON. In the name of the gods! withdraw or we shall fight you the whole day long.

CHORUS. No, not as long as I retain an atom of breath. Ha! your desire is to tyrannize over us!

BDELYCLEON. Everything is now tyranny with us, no matter what is concerned, whether it be large or small. Tyranny! I have not heard the word mentioned once in fifty years, and now it is more common than salt-fish, the word is even current on the market. If you are buying gurnards and don't want anchovies, the huckster next door, who is selling the latter, at once exclaims, "That is a man, whose kitchen savours of tyranny!" If you ask for onions to season your fish, the green-stuff woman winks one eye and asks, "Ha! you ask for onions! are you seeking to tyrannize, or do you think that Athens must pay you your seasonings as a tribute?"

XANTHIAS. Yesterday I went to see a gay girl about noon and suggested she should mount and ride me; she flew into a rage, pretending I wanted to restore the tyranny of Hippias.

BDELYCLEON. That's the talk that pleases the people! As for myself, I want my father to lead a joyous life like Morychus instead of going away before dawn to basely calumniate and condemn; and for this I am accused of conspiracy and tyrannical practice!

PHILOCLEON. And quite right too, by Zeus! The most exquisite dishes do not make up to me for the life of which you deprive me. I scorn your red mullet and your eels, and would far rather eat a nice little law suitlet cooked in the pot.

BDELYCLEON. 'Tis because you have got used to seeking your pleasure in it; but if you will agree to keep silence and hear me, I think I could persuade you that you deceive yourself altogether.

PHILOCLEON. *I* deceive myself, when I am judging?

BDELYCLEON. You do not see that you are the laughing-stock of these men, whom you are ready to worship. You are their slave and do not know it.

PHILOCLEON. *I* a slave, I, who lord it over all!

BDELYCLEON. Not at all, you think you are ruling when you are only obeying. Tell me, father, what do you get out of the tribute paid by so many Greek towns?

PHILOCLEON. Much, and I appoint my colleagues jurymen.

BDELYCLEON. And I also. Release him, all of you, and bring me a sword. If

my arguments do not prevail I will fall upon this blade. As for you, tell me whether you accept the verdict of the Court.

PHILOCLEON. May I never drink my Heliast's pay in honour of the good Genius, if I do not.

CHORUS. Tis now we have to draw upon our arsenal for some fresh weapon; above all do not side with this youth in his opinions. You see how serious the question has become; 'twill be all over with us, which the gods forfend, if he should prevail.

BDELYCLEON. Let someone bring me my tablets with all speed!

CHORUS. Your tablets? Ha, ha! what an importance you would fain assume!

BDELYCLEON. I merely wish to note down my father's points.

PHILOCLEON. But what will you say of it, if he should triumph in the debate?

CHORUS. That old men are no longer good for anything; we shall be perpetually laughed at in the streets, shall be called thallophores, mere brief-bags. You are to be the champion of all our rights and sovereignty. Come, take courage! Bring into action all the resources of your wit.

PHILOCLEON. At the outset I will prove to you that there exists no king whose might is greater than ours. Is there a pleasure, a blessing comparable with that of a juryman? Is there a being who lives more in the midst of delights, who is more feared, aged though he be? From the moment I leave my bed, men of power, the most illustrious in the city, await me at the bar of the tribunal; the moment I am seen from the greatest distance, they come forward to offer me a gentle hand, — that has pilfered the public funds; they entreat me, bowing right low and with a piteous voice, "Oh! father," they say, "pity me, I adjure you by the profit *you* were able to make in the public service or in the army, when dealing with the victuals." Why, the man who thus speaks would not know of my existence, had I not let him off on some former occasion.

BDELYCLEON. Let us note this first point, the supplicants.

PHILOCLEON. These entreaties have appeased my wrath, and I enter — firmly resolved to do nothing that I have promised. Nevertheless I listen to the accused.

Oh! what tricks to secure acquittal! Ah! there is no form of flattery that is not addressed to the heliast! Some groan over their poverty and they exaggerate the truth in order to make their troubles equal to my own. Others tell us anecdotes or some comic story from Aesop. Others, again, cut jokes; they fancy I shall be appeased if I laugh. If we are not even then won over, why, then they drag forward their young children by the hand, both boys and girls, who prostrate themselves and whine with one accord, and then the father, trembling as if before a god, beseeches me not to condemn him out of pity for them, "If you love the voice of the lamb, have pity on my son's"; and because I am fond of little sows, I must yield to his daughter's prayers. Then we relax the heat of our wrath a little for him. Is not this great power indeed, which allows even wealth to be disdained?

BDELYCLEON. A second point to note, the disdain of wealth. And now recall to me what are the advantages you enjoy, you, who pretend to rule over Greece?

PHILOCLEON. Being entrusted with the inspection of the young men, we have a right to examine their organs. Is Aeagrus accused, he is not acquitted before he has recited a passage from 'Niobe' and he chooses the finest. If a flute-player gains his case, he adjusts his mouth-strap in return and plays us the final air while we are leaving. A father on his death-bed names some husband for his daughter, who is his sole heir; but we care little for his will or for the shell so solemnly placed over the seal; we give the young maiden to him who has best known how to secure our favour. Name me another duty that is so important and so irresponsible.

BDELYCLEON. Aye, 'tis a fine privilege, and the only one on which I can congratulate you; but surely to violate the will is to act badly towards the heiress.

PHILOCLEON. And if the Senate and the people have trouble in deciding some important case, it is decreed to send the culprits before the heliasts; then Euathlus and the illustrious Colaconymus, who cast away his shield, swear not to betray us and to fight for the people. Did ever an orator carry the day with his opinion if he had not first declared that the jury should be dismissed for the day as soon as they had given their first verdict? We are the only ones whom Cleon, the great bawler, does not badger. On the contrary, he protects and caresses us; he keeps off the flies, which is what you have never done for your father. Theorus, who is a man not less illustrious than Euphemius, takes the sponge out of the pot and blacks our shoes. See then what good things you deprive and

despoil me of. Pray, is this obeying or being a slave, as you pretended to be able to prove?

BDELYCLEON. Talk away to your heart's content; you must come to a stop at last and then you shall see that this grand power only resembles one of those things that, wash 'em as you will, remain as foul as ever.

PHILOCLEON. But I am forgetting the most pleasing thing of all. When I return home with my pay, everyone runs to greet me because of my money. First my daughter bathes me, anoints my feet, stoops to kiss me and, while she is calling me "her dearest father," fishes out my triobolus with her tongue; then my little wife comes to wheedle me and brings a nice light cake; she sits beside me and entreats me in a thousand ways, "Do take this now; do have some more." All this delights me hugely, and I have no need to turn towards you or the steward to know when it shall please him to serve my dinner, all the while cursing and grumbling. But if he does not quickly knead my cake, I have this, which is my defence, my shield against all ills. If you do not pour me out drink, I have brought this long-eared jar full of wine. How it brays, when I bend back and bury its neck in my mouth! What terrible and noisy gurglings, and how I laugh at your wine-skins. As to power, am I not equal to the king of the gods? If our assembly is noisy, all say as they pass, "Great gods! the tribunal is rolling out its thunder!" If I let loose the lightning, the richest, aye, the noblest are half dead with fright and shit themselves with terror. You yourself are afraid of me, yea, by Demeter! you are afraid.

BDELYCLEON. May I die if you frighten me.

CHORUS. Never have I heard speech so elegant or so sensible.

PHILOCLEON. Ah! he thought he had only to turn me round his finger; he should, however, have known the vigour of my eloquence.

CHORUS. He has said everything without omission. I felt myself grow taller while I listened to him. Methought myself meting out justice in the Islands of the Blest, so much was I taken with the charm of his words.

BDELYCLEON. How overjoyed they are! What extravagant delight! Ah! ah! you are going to get a thrashing to-day.

CHORUS. Come, plot everything you can to beat him; 'tis not easy to soften me

if you do not talk on my side, and if you have nothing but nonsense to spout, 'tis time to buy a good millstone, freshly cut withal, to crush my anger.

BDELYCLEON. The cure of a disease, so inveterate and so widespread in Athens, is a difficult task and of too great importance for the scope of Comedy. Nevertheless, my old father….

PHILOCLEON. Cease to call me by that name, for, if you do not prove me a slave and that quickly too, you must die by my hand, even if I must be deprived of my share in the sacred feasts.

BDELYCLEON. Listen to me, dear little father, unruffle that frowning brow and reckon, you can do so without trouble, not with pebbles, but on your fingers, what is the sum-total of the tribute paid by the allied towns; besides this we have the direct imposts, a mass of percentage dues, the fees of the courts of justice, the produce from the mines, the markets, the harbours, the public lands and the confiscations. All these together amount to close on two thousand talents. Take from this sum the annual pay of the dicasts; they number six thousand, and there have never been more in this town; so therefore it is one hundred and fifty talents that come to you.

PHILOCLEON. What! our pay is not even a tithe of the State revenue?

BDELYCLEON. Why no, certainly not.

PHILOCLEON. And where does the rest go then?

BDELYCLEON. To those who say: "I shall never betray the interests of the masses; I shall always fight for the people." And 'tis you, father, who let yourself be caught with their fine talk, who give them all power over yourself. They are the men who extort fifty talents at a time by threat and intimidation from the allies. "Pay tribute to me," they say, "or I shall loose the lightning on your town and destroy it." And you, you are content to gnaw the crumbs of your own might. What do the allies do? They see that the Athenian mob lives on the tribunal in niggard and miserable fashion, and they count you for nothing, for not more than the vote of Connus; 'tis on those wretches that they lavish everything, dishes of salt fish, wine, tapestries, cheese, honey, sesame-fruit, cushions, flagons, rich clothing, chaplets, necklets, drinking-cups, all that yields pleasure and health. And you, their master, to you as a reward for all your toil both on land and sea, nothing is given, not even a clove of garlic to eat with your

little fish.

PHILOCLEON. No, undoubtedly not; I have had to send and buy some from Eucharides. But you told me I was a slave. Prove it then, for I am dying with impatience.

BDELYCLEON. Is it not the worst of all slaveries to see all these wretches and their flatterers, whom they gorge with gold, at the head of affairs? As for you, you are content with the three obols they give you and which you have so painfully earned in the galleys, in battles and sieges. But what I stomach least is that you go to sit on the tribunal by order. Some lewd stripling, the son of Chereas, to wit, enters your house balancing his body, rotten with debauchery, on his straddling legs and charges you to come and judge at daybreak, and precisely to the minute. "He who only presents himself after the opening of the Court," says he, "will not get the triobolus." But he himself, though he arrives late, will nevertheless get his drachma as a public advocate. If an accused man makes him some present, he shares it with a colleague and the pair agree to arrange the matter like two sawyers, one of whom pulls and the other pushes. As for you, you have only eyes for the public pay-clerk, and you see nothing.

PHILOCLEON. Can it be I am treated thus? Oh! what is it you are saying? You stir me to the bottom of my heart! I am all ears! I cannot syllable what I feel.

BDELYCLEON. Consider then; you might be rich, both you and all the others; I know not why you let yourself be fooled by these folk who call themselves the people's friends. A myriad of towns obey you, from the Euxine to Sardis. What do you gain thereby? Nothing but this miserable pay, and even that is like the oil with which the flock of wool is impregnated and is doled to you drop by drop, just enough to keep you from dying of hunger. They want you to be poor, and I will tell you why. 'Tis so that you may know only those who nourish you, and so that, if it pleases them to loose you against one of their foes, you shall leap upon him with fury. If they wished to assure the well-being of the people, nothing would be easier for them. We have now a thousand towns that pay us tribute; let them command each of these to feed twenty Athenians; then twenty thousand of our citizens would be eating nothing but hare, would drink nothing but the purest of milk, and always crowned with garlands, would be enjoying the delights to which the great name of their country and the trophies of Marathon give them the right; whereas to-day you are like the hired labourers who gather the olives; you follow him who pays you.

PHILOCLEON. Alas! my hand is benumbed; I can no longer draw my sword. What has become of my strength?

BDELYCLEON. When they are afraid, they promise to divide Euboea among you and to give each fifty bushels of wheat, but what have they given you? Nothing excepting, quite recently, five bushels of barley, and even these you have only obtained with great difficulty, on proving you were not aliens, and then choenix by choenix. That is why I always kept you shut in; I wanted you to be fed by me and no longer at the beck of these blustering braggarts. Even now I am ready to let you have all you want, provided you no longer let yourself be suckled by the pay-clerk.

CHORUS. He was right who said, "Decide nothing till you have heard both sides," for it seems to me, that 'tis you who now gain the complete victory. My wrath is appeased, I throw away my sticks. Come, comrade, our contemporary, let yourself be gained over by his words; come, do not be too obstinate or too perverse. Why have I no relation, no ally to speak to me like this? Do not doubt it, 'tis a god who is now protecting you and loading you with his benefits. Accept them.

BDELYCLEON. I will feed him, I will give him everything that is suitable for an old man, oatmeal gruel, a cloak, soft furs and a maid to rub his loins and play with his tool. But he is silent and utters not a word; 'tis a bad sign.

CHORUS. He has thought the thing over and has recognized his folly; he reproaches himself for not having followed your advice always. But there he is, converted by your words, and has no doubt become wiser to alter his ways in future and to believe in none but you.

PHILOCLEON. Alas! alas!

BDELYCLEON. Now why this lamentation?

PHILOCLEON. A truce to your promises! What I love is down there, 'tis down there I want to be, there, where the herald cries, "Who has not yet voted? Let him rise!" I want to be the last to leave the urn of all. Oh, my soul, my soul! where art thou? come! oh! dark shadows, make way for me! By Heracles, may I reach the Court in time to convict Cleon of theft.

BDELYCLEON. Come, father, in the name of the gods, believe me!

PHILOCLEON. Believe you! Ask me anything, anything, except one.

BDELYCLEON. What is it? Let us hear.

PHILOCLEON. Not to judge any more! Before I consent, I shall have appeared before Pluto.

BDELYCLEON. Very well then, since you find so much pleasure in it, go down there no more, but stay here and deal out justice to your slaves.

PHILOCLEON. But what is there to judge? Are you mad?

BDELYCLEON. Everything as in a tribunal. If a servant opens a door secretly, you inflict upon him a simple fine; 'tis what you have repeatedly done down there. Everything can be arranged to suit you. If it is warm in the morning, you can judge in the sunlight; if it is snowing, then seated at your fire; if it rains, you go indoors; and if you only rise at noon, there will be no Thesmothetes to exclude you from the precincts.

PHILOCLEON. The notion pleases me.

BDELYCLEON. Moreover, if a pleader is long-winded, you will not be fasting and chafing and seeking vengeance on the accused.

PHILOCLEON. But could I judge as well with my mouth full?

BDELYCLEON. Much better. Is it not said, that the dicasts, when deceived by lying witnesses, have need to ruminate well in order to arrive at the truth?

PHILOCLEON. Well said, but you have not told me yet who will pay salary.

BDELYCLEON. I will.

PHILOCLEON. So much the better; in this way I shall be paid by myself. Because that cursed jester, Lysistratus, played me an infamous trick the other day. He received a drachma for the two of us and went on the fish-market to get it changed and then brought me back three mullet scales. I took them for obols and crammed them into my mouth; but the smell choked me and I quickly spat them out. So I dragged him before the Court.

BDELYCLEON. And what did he say to that?

PHILOCLEON. Well, he pretended I had the stomach of a cock. “You have soon digested the money,” he said with a laugh.

BDELYCLEON. You see, that is yet another advantage.

PHILOCLEON. And no small one either. Come, do as you will.

BDELYCLEON. Wait! I will bring everything here.

PHILOCLEON. You see, the oracles are coming true; I have heard it foretold, that one day the Athenians would dispense justice in their own houses, that each citizen would have himself a little tribunal constructed in his porch similar to the altars of Hecaté, and that there would be such before every door.

BDELYCLEON. Hold! what do you say? I have brought you everything needful and much more into the bargain. See, here is an *article,* should you want to piss; it shall be hung beside you on a nail.

PHILOCLEON. Good idea! Right useful at my age. You have found the true preventive of bladder troubles.

BDELYCLEON. Here is fire, and near to it are lentils, should you want to take a snack.

PHILOCLEON. ’Tis admirably arranged. For thus, even when feverish, I shall nevertheless receive my pay; and besides, I could eat my lentils without quitting my seat. But why this cock?

BDELYCLEON. So that, should you doze during some pleading, he may awaken you by crowing up there.

PHILOCLEON. I want only for one thing more; all the rest is as good as can be.

BDELYCLEON. What is that?

PHILOCLEON. If only they could bring me an image of the hero Lycus.

BDELYCLEON. Here it is! Why, you might think it was the god himself!

PHILOCLEON. Oh! hero, my master! how repulsive you are to look at! ’Tis an exact portrait of Cleonymus!

SOSIAS. That is why, hero though he be, he has no weapon.

BDELYCLEON. The sooner you take your seat, the sooner I shall call a case.

PHILOCLEON. Call it, for I have been seated ever so long.

BDELYCLEON. Let us see. What case shall we bring up first? Is there a slave who has done something wrong? Ah! you Thracian there, who burnt the stew-pot t’other day.

PHILOCLEON. Hold, hold! Here is a fine state of things! you had almost made me judge without a bar, and that is the thing of all others most sacred among us.

BDELYCLEON. By Zeus! I had forgotten it, but I will run indoors and bring you one immediately. What is this after all, though, but mere force of habit!

XANTHIAS. Plague take the brute! Can anyone keep such a dog?

BDELYCLEON. Hullo! what’s the matter?

XANTHIAS. Why, ’tis Labes, who has just rushed into the kitchen and has seized a whole Sicilian cheese and gobbled it up.

BDELYCLEON. Good! this will be the first offence I shall make my father try. *(To Xanthias.)* Come along and lay your accusation.

XANTHIAS. No, not I; the other dog vows he will be accuser, if the matter is set down for trial.

BDELYCLEON. Well then, bring them both along.

XANTHIAS. I am coming.

PHILOCLEON. What is this?

BDELYCLEON. ’Tis the pig-trough of the swine dedicated to Hestia.

PHILOCLEON. But it’s sacrilege to bring it here.

BDELYCLEON. No, no, by addressing Hestia first, I might, thanks to her, crush an adversary.

PHILOCLEON. Put an end to delay by calling up the case. My verdict is already settled.

BDELYCLEON. Wait! I must yet bring out the tablets and the scrolls.

PHILOCLEON. Oh! I am boiling, I am dying with impatience at your delays.
I could have traced the sentence in the dust.

BDELYCLEON. There you are.

PHILOCLEON. Then call the case.

BDELYCLEON. I am here.

PHILOCLEON. Firstly, who is this?

BDELYCLEON. Ah! my god! why, this is unbearable! I have forgotten the urns.

PHILOCLEON. Well now! where are you off to?

BDELYCLEON. To look for the urns.

PHILOCLEON. Unnecessary, I shall use these vases.

BDELYCLEON. Very well, then we have all we need, except the clepsydra.

PHILOCLEON. Well then! and this? what is it if not a clepsydra?

BDELYCLEON. True again! 'Tis calling things by their right name! Let fire be brought quickly from the house with myrtle boughs and incense, and let us invoke the gods before opening the sitting.

CHORUS. Offer them libations and your vows and we will thank them that a noble agreement has put an end to your bickerings and strife.

BDELYCLEON. And first let there be a sacred silence.

CHORUS. Oh! god of Delphi! oh! Phoebus Apollo! convert into the greatest

blessing for us all what is now happening before this house, and cure us of our error, oh, Paean, our helper!

BDELYCLEON. Oh! Powerful god, Apollo Aguieus, who watchest at the door of my entrance hall, accept this fresh sacrifice; I offer it that you may deign to soften my father's excessive severity; he is as hard as iron, his heart is like sour wine; do thou pour into it a little honey. Let him become gentle like other men, let him take more interest in the accused than in the accusers, may he allow himself to be softened by entreaties; calm his acrid humour and deprive his irritable mind of all sting.

CHORUS. We unite our vows and chants to those of this new magistrate. His words have won our favour and we are convinced that he loves the people more than any of the young men of the present day.

BDELYCLEON. If there be any judge near at hand, let him enter; once the proceedings have opened, we shall admit him no more.

PHILOCLEON. Who is the defendant? Ha! what a sentence he will get!

XANTHIAS *(Prosecuting Council)*. Listen to the indictment. A dog of Cydathenea doth hereby charge Labes of Aexonia with having devoured a Sicilian cheese by himself without accomplices. Penalty demanded, a collar of fig-tree wood.

PHILOCLEON. Nay, a dog's death, if convicted.

BDELYCLEON. This is Labes, the defendant.

PHILOCLEON. Oh! what a wretched brute! how entirely he looks the rogue! He thinks to deceive me by keeping his jaws closed. Where is the plaintiff, the dog of Cydathenea?

DOG. Bow wow! bow wow!

BDELYCLEON. Here he is.

PHILOCLEON. Why, 'tis a second Labes, a great barker and a licker of dishes.

SOSIAS *(Herald)*. Silence! Keep your seats! *(To Xanthias.)* And you, up on

your feet and accuse him.

PHILOCLEON. Go on, and I will help myself and eat these lentils.

XANTHIAS. Men of the jury, listen to this indictment I have drawn up. He has committed the blackest of crimes, both against me and the seamen. He sought refuge in a dark corner to glutton on a big Sicilian cheese, with which he sated his hunger.

PHILOCLEON. Why, the crime is clear; the foul brute this very moment belched forth a horrible odour of cheese right under my nose.

XANTHIAS. And he refused to share with me. And yet can anyone style himself your benefactor, when he does not cast a morsel to your poor dog?

PHILOCLEON. Then he has not shared?

XANTHIAS. Not with me, his comrade.

PHILOCLEON. Then his madness is as hot as my lentils.

BDELYCLEON. In the name of the gods, father! No hurried verdict without hearing the other side!

PHILOCLEON. But the evidence is plain; the fact speaks for itself.

XANTHIAS. Then beware of acquitting the most selfish of canine gluttons, who has devoured the whole cheese, rind and all, prowling round the platter.

PHILOCLEON. There is not even enough left for me to fill up the chinks in my pitcher.

XANTHIAS. Besides, you *must* punish him, because the same house cannot keep two thieves. Let me not have barked in vain, else I shall never bark again.

PHILOCLEON. Oh! the black deeds he has just denounced! What a shameless thief! Say, cock, is not that your opinion too? Ha, ha! He thinks as I do. Here, Thesmothetes! where are you? Hand me the vessel.

SOSIAS *(Thesmothetes)*. Take it yourself. I go to call the witnesses; these are a

plate, a pestle, a cheese knife, a brazier, a stew-pot and other half-burnt utensils. *(To Philocleon.)* But you have not finished? you are piddling away still! Have done and be seated.

PHILOCLEON. Ha, ha! I reckon I know somebody who will shit himself with fright today.

BDELYCLEON. Will you never cease showing yourself hard and intractable, and especially to the accused? You tear them to pieces tooth and nail.

PHILOCLEON. Come forward and defend yourself. What means this silence? Answer.

SOSIAS. No doubt he has nothing to say.

BDELYCLEON. Not so, but I think he has got what happened once to Thucydides, when accused; his jaws suddenly set fast. Get away! I will undertake your defence. — Gentlemen of the jury, 'tis a difficult thing to speak for a dog who has been calumniated, but nevertheless I will try. 'Tis a good dog, and he chivies the wolves finely.

PHILOCLEON. He! that thief and conspirator!

BDELYCLEON. But 'tis the best of all our dogs; he is capable of guarding a whole flock.

PHILOCLEON. And what good is that, if he eats the cheese?

BDELYCLEON. What? he fights for you, he guards your door; 'tis an excellent dog in every respect. Forgive him his larceny; he is wretchedly ignorant, he cannot play the lyre.

PHILOCLEON. I wish he did not know how to write either; then the rascal would not have drawn up his pleadings.

BDELYCLEON. Witnesses, I pray you, listen. Come forward, grafting-knife, and speak up; answer me clearly. You were paymaster at the time. Did you grate out to the soldiers what was given you? — He says he did so.

PHILOCLEON. But, by Zeus! he lies.

BDELYCLEON. Oh! have patience. Take pity on the unfortunate. Labes feeds only on fish-bones and fishes' heads and has not an instant of peace. The other is good only to guard the house; he never moves from here, but demands his share of all that is brought in and bites those who refuse.

PHILOCLEON. Oh! Heaven! have I fallen ill? I feel my anger cooling! Woe to me! I am softening!

BDELYCLEON. Have pity, father, pity, I adjure you; you would not have him dead. Where are his puppies? Come, poor little beasties, yap, up on your haunches, beg and whine!

PHILOCLEON. Descend, descend, descend, descend!

BDELYCLEON. I will descend, although that word, "descend," has too often raised false hope. None the less, I will descend.

PHILOCLEON. Plague seize it! Have I then done wrong to eat! What! I to be crying! Ah! I certainly should not be weeping, if I were not blown out with lentils.

BDELYCLEON. Then he is acquitted?

PHILOCLEON. I did not say so.

BDELYCLEON. Ah! my dear father, be good! be humane! Take this voting pebble and rush with your eyes closed to that second urn and, father, acquit him.

PHILOCLEON. No, I know no more how to acquit than to play the lyre.

BDELYCLEON. Come quickly, I will show you the way.

PHILOCLEON. Is this the first urn?

BDELYCLEON. Yes.

PHILOCLEON. Then I have voted.

BDELYCLEON *(aside)*. I have fooled him and he has acquitted in spite of himself.

PHILOCLEON. Come, I will turn out the urns. What is the result?

BDELYCLEON. We shall see. — Labes, you stand acquitted. — Eh! father, what's the matter, what is it?

PHILOCLEON. Ah me! ah me! water! water!

BDELYCLEON. Pull yourself together, sir!

PHILOCLEON. Tell me! Is he really acquitted?

BDELYCLEON. Yes, certainly.

PHILOCLEON. Then it's all over with me!

BDELYCLEON. Courage, dear father, don't let this afflict you so terribly.

PHILOCLEON. And so I have charged my conscience with the acquittal of an accused being! What will become of me? Sacred gods! forgive me. I did it despite myself; it is not in my character.

BDELYCLEON. Do not vex yourself, father; I will feed you well, will take you everywhere to eat and drink with me; you shall go to every feast; henceforth your life shall be nothing but pleasure, and Hyperbolus shall no longer have you for a tool. But come, let us go in.

PHILOCLEON. So be it; if you will, let us go in.

CHORUS *(Parabasis)*. Go where it pleases you and may your happiness be great. You meanwhile, oh! countless myriads, listen to the sound counsels I am going to give you and take care they are not lost upon you. 'Twould be the fate of vulgar spectators, not that of such an audience. Hence, people, lend me your ear, if you love frank speaking. The poet has a reproach to make against his audience; he says you have ill-treated him in return for the many services he has rendered you. At first he kept himself in the background and lent help secretly to other poets, and like the prophetic Genius, who hid himself in the belly of Eurycles, slipped within the spirit of another and whispered to him many a comic hit. Later he ran the risks of the theatre on his own account, with his face uncovered, and dared to guide his Muse unaided. Though overladen with success and honours more than any of your poets, indeed despite all his glory, he does

not yet believe he has attained his goal; his heart is not swollen with pride and he does not seek to seduce the young folk in the wrestling school. If any lover runs up to him to complain because he is furious at seeing the object of his passion derided on the stage, he takes no heed of such reproaches, for he is only inspired with honest motives and his Muse is no go-between. From the very outset of his dramatic career he has disdained to assail those who were men, but with a courage worthy of Heracles himself he attacked the most formidable monsters, and at the beginning went straight for that beast with the sharp teeth, with the terrible eyes that flashed lambent fire like those of Cynna, surrounded by a hundred lewd flatterers who spittle-licked him to his heart's content; it had a voice like a roaring torrent, the stench of a seal, a foul Lamia's testicles, and the rump of a camel. Our poet did not tremble at the sight of this horrible monster, nor did he dream of gaining him over; and again this very day he is fighting for your good. Last year besides, he attacked those pale, shivering and feverish beings who strangled your fathers in the dark, throttled your grandfathers, and who, lying in the beds of the most inoffensive, piled up against them lawsuits, summonses and witnesses to such an extent, that many of them flew in terror to the Polemarch for refuge. Such is the champion you have found to purify your country of all its evil, and last year you betrayed him, when he sowed the most novel ideas, which, however, did not strike root, because you did not understand their value; notwithstanding this, he swears by Bacchus, the while offering him libations, that none ever heard better comic verses. 'Tis a disgrace to you not to have caught their drift at once; as for the poet, he is none the less appreciated by the enlightened judges. He shivered his oars in rushing boldly forward to board his foe. But in future, my dear fellow-citizens, love and honour more those of your poets who seek to imagine and express some new thought. Make their ideas your own, keep them in your caskets like sweet-scented fruit. If you do, your clothing will emit an odour of wisdom the whole year through.

Formerly we were untiring, especially in *other* exercises, but 'tis over now; our brow is crowned with hair whiter than the swan. We must, however, rekindle a youthful ardour in these remnants of what was, and for myself, I prefer my old age to the curly hair and the finery of all these lewd striplings.

Should any among you spectators look upon me with wonder, because of this wasp waist, or not know the meaning of this sting, I will soon dispel his ignorance. We, who wear this appendage, are the true Attic men, who alone are noble and native to the soil, the bravest of all people. 'Tis we who, weapon in hand, have done so much for the country, when the Barbarian shed torrents of

fire and smoke over our city in his relentless desire to seize our nests by force. At once we ran up, armed with lance and buckler, and, drunk with the bitter wine of anger, we gave them battle, man standing to man and rage distorting our lips. A hail of arrows hid the sky. However, by the help of the gods, we drove off the foe towards evening. Before the battle an owl had flown over our army. Then we pursued them with our lance point in their loins as one hunts the tunny-fish; they fled and we stung them in the jaw and in the eyes, so that even now the barbarians tell each other that there is nothing in the world more to be feared than the Attic wasp.

Oh! at that time I was terrible, I feared nothing; forth on my galleys I went in search of my foe and subjected him. Then we never thought of rounding fine phrases, we never dreamt of calumny; 'twas who should prove the strongest rower. And thus we took many a town from the Medes, and 'tis to us that Athens owes the tributes that our young men thieve to-day.

Look well at us, and you will see that we have all the character and habits of the wasp. Firstly, if roused, no beings are more irascible, more relentless than we are. In all other things, too, we act like wasps. We collect in swarms, in a kind of nests, and some go a-judging with the Archon, some with the Eleven, others at the Odeon; there are yet others, who hardly move at all, like the grubs in the cells, but remain glued to the walls and bent double to the ground. We also pay full attention to the discovery of all sorts of means of existing and sting the first who comes, so as to live at his expense. Finally, we have among us drones, who have no sting and who, without giving themselves the least trouble, seize on our revenues as they flow past them and devour them. 'Tis this that grieves us most of all, to see men who have never served or held either lance or oar in defence of their country, enriching themselves at our expense without ever raising a blister on their hands. In short, I give it as my deliberate opinion that in future every citizen not possessed of a sting shall not receive the triobolus.

PHILOCLEON. As long as I live, I will never give up this cloak; 'tis the one I wore in that battle when Boreas delivered us from such fierce attacks,

BDELYCLEON. You do not know what is good for you.

PHILOCLEON. Ah! I know not how to use fine clothing! T'other day, when cramming myself with fried fish, I dropped so many grease spots that I had to pay three obols to the cleaner.

BDELYCLEON. At least have a try, since you have once for all handed the care for your well-being over to me.

PHILOCLEON. Very well then! what must I do?

BDELYCLEON. Take off your cloak, and put on this tunic in its stead.

PHILOCLEON. 'Twas well worth while to beget and bring up children, so that this one should now wish to choke me.

BDELYCLEON. Come, take this tunic and put it on without so much talk.

PHILOCLEON. Great gods! what sort of a cursed garment is this?

BDELYCLEON. Some call it a pelisse, others a Persian cloak.

PHILOCLEON. Ah! I thought it was a wraprascal like those made at Thymaetia.

BDELYCLEON. Pray, how should you know such garments? 'Tis only at Sardis you could have seen them, and you have never been there.

PHILOCLEON. I' faith, no! but it seems to me exactly like the mantle Morychus sports.

BDELYCLEON. Not at all; I tell you they are woven at Ecbatana.

PHILOCLEON. What! are there woollen ox-guts then at Ecbatana?

BDELYCLEON. Whatever are you talking about? These are woven by the Barbarians at great cost. I am certain this pelisse has consumed more than a talent of wool.

PHILOCLEON. It should be called wool-waster then instead of pelisse.

BDELYCLEON. Come, father, just hold still for a moment and put it on.

PHILOCLEON. Oh! horrors! what a waft of heat the hussy wafts up my nose!

BDELYCLEON. Will you have done with this fooling?

PHILOCLEON. No, by Zeus! if need be, I prefer you should put me in the oven.

BDELYCLEON. Come! I will put it round you. There!

PHILOCLEON. At all events, bring out a crook.

BDELYCLEON. Why, whatever for?

PHILOCLEON. To drag me out of it before I am quite melted.

BDELYCLEON. Now take off those wretched clogs and put on these nice Laconian slippers.

PHILOCLEON. I put on odious slippers made by our foes! Never!

BDELYCLEON. Come! put your foot in and push hard. Quick!

PHILOCLEON. 'Tis ill done of you. You want me to put my foot on Laconian ground.

BDELYCLEON. Now the other.

PHILOCLEON. Ah! no, not that one; one of its toes holds the Laconians in horror.

BDELYCLEON. Positively you must.

PHILOCLEON. Alas! alas! Then I shall have no chilblains in my old age.

BDELYCLEON. Now, hurry up and get them on; and now imitate the easy effeminate gait of the rich. See, like this.

PHILOCLEON. There!… Look at my get-up and tell me which rich man I most resemble in my walk.

BDELYCLEON. Why, you look like a garlic plaster on a boil.

PHILOCLEON. Ah! I am longing to swagger and sway my rump about.

BDELYCLEON. Now, will you know how to talk gravely with well-informed men of good class?

PHILOCLEON. Undoubtedly.

BDELYCLEON. What will you say to them?

PHILOCLEON. Oh, lots of things. First of all I shall say, that Lamia, seeing herself caught, let fly a fart; then, that Cardopion and her mother….

BDELYCLEON. Come, no fabulous tales, pray! talk of realities, of domestic facts, as is usually done.

PHILOCLEON. Ah! I know something that is indeed most domestic. Once upon a time there was a rat and a cat….

BDELYCLEON. "Oh, you ignorant fool," as Theagenes said to the scavenger in a rage. Are you going to talk of cats and rats among high-class people?

PHILOCLEON. Then what should I talk about?

BDELYCLEON. Tell some dignified story. Relate how you were sent on a solemn mission with Androcles and Clisthenes.

PHILOCLEON. On a mission! never in my life, except once to Paros, a job which brought me in two obols a day.

BDELYCLEON. At least say, that you have just seen Ephudion making good play in the pancratium with Ascondas and, that despite his age and his white hair, he is still robust in loin and arm and flank and that his chest is a very breastplate.

PHILOCLEON. Stop! stop! what nonsense! Who ever contested at the pancratium with a breastplate on?

BDELYCLEON. That is how well-behaved folk like to talk. But another thing. When at wine, it would be fitting to relate some good story of your youthful days. What is your most brilliant feat?

PHILOCLEON. My best feat? Ah! 'twas when I stole Ergasion's vine-props.

BDELYCLEON. You and your vine-props! you'll be the death of me! Tell of one of your boar-hunts or of when you coursed the hare. Talk about some torch-

race you were in; tell of some deed of daring.

PHILOCLEON. Ah! my most daring deed was when, quite a young man still, I prosecuted Phayllus, the runner, for defamation, and he was condemned by a majority of two votes.

BDELYCLEON. Enough of that! Now recline there, and practise the bearing that is fitting at table in society.

PHILOCLEON. How must I recline? Tell me quick!

BDELYCLEON. In an elegant style.

PHILOCLEON. Like this?

BDELYCLEON. Not at all.

PHILOCLEON. How then?

BDELYCLEON. Spread your knees on the tapestries and give your body the most easy curves, like those taught in the gymnasium. Then praise some bronze vase, survey the ceiling, admire the awning stretched over the court. Water is poured over our hands; the tables are spread; we sup and, after ablution, we now offer libations to the gods.

PHILOCLEON. But, by Zeus! this supper is but a dream, it appears!

BDELYCLEON. The flute-player has finished the prelude. The guests are Theorus, Aeschines, Phanus, Cleon, Acestor; and beside this last, I don't know who else. You are with them. Shall you know exactly how to take up the songs that are started?

PHILOCLEON. Better than any born mountaineer of Attica.

BDELYCLEON. That we shall see. Suppose me to be Cleon. I am the first to begin the song of Harmodius, and you take it up: "There never was yet seen in Athens …

PHILOCLEON. … such a rogue or such a thief."

BDELYCLEON. Why, you wretched man, ‘twill be the end of you if you sing that. He will vow your ruin, your destruction, to chase you out of the country.

PHILOCLEON. Well! then I shall answer his threats with another song: “With your madness for supreme power, you will end by overthrowing the city, which even now totters towards ruin.”

BDELYCLEON. And when Theorus, prone at Cleon’s feet, takes his hand and sings, “Like Admetus, love those who are brave,” what reply will you make him?

PHILOCLEON. I shall sing, “I know not how to play the fox, nor call myself the friend of both parties.”

BDELYCLEON. Then comes the turn of Aeschines, the son of Sellus, and a well-trained and clever musician, who will sing, “Good things and riches for Clitagoras and me and eke for the Thessalians!”

PHILOCLEON. “The two of us have squandered a deal between us.”

BDELYCLEON. At this game you seem at home. But come, we will go and dine with Philoctemon. — Slave! slave! place our dinner in a basket, and let us go for a good long drinking bout.

PHILOCLEON. By no means, it is too dangerous; for after drinking, one breaks in doors, one comes to blows, one batters everything. Anon, when the wine is slept off, one is forced to pay.

BDELYCLEON. Not if you are with decent people. Either they undertake to appease the offended person or, better still, you say something witty, you tell some comic story, perhaps one of those you have yourself heard at table, either in Aesop’s style or in that of Sybaris; all laugh and the trouble is ended.

PHILOCLEON. Faith! ’tis worth while learning many stories then, if you are thus not punished for the ill you do. But come, no more delay!

CHORUS. More than once have I given proof of cunning and never of stupidity, but how much more clever is Amynias, the son of Sellus and of the race of forelock-wearers; him we saw one day coming to dine with Leogaras, bringing as his share one apple and a pomegranate, and bear in mind he was as hungry as

Antiphon. He went on an embassy to Pharsalus, and there he lived solely among the Thessalian mercenaries; indeed, is he not the vilest of mercenaries himself?

Oh! blessed, oh! fortunate Automenes, how enviable is your fortune! You have three sons, the most industrious in the world; one is the friend of all, a very able man, the first among the lyre-players, the favourite of the Graces. The second is an actor, and his talent is beyond all praise. As for Ariphrades, he is by far the most gifted; his father would swear to me, that without any master whatever and solely through the spontaneous effort of his happy nature, he taught himself the use of his tongue in the lewd places where he spends the whole of his time.

Some have said that I and Cleon were reconciled. This is the truth of the matter: Cleon was harassing me, persecuting and belabouring me in every way; and, when I was being fleeced, the public laughed at seeing me uttering such loud cries; not that they cared about me, but simply curious to know whether, when trodden down by my enemy, I would not hurl at him some taunt. Noticing this, I have played the wheedler a bit; but now, look! the prop is deceiving the vine!

XANTHIAS. Oh! tortoises! happy to have so hard a skin, thrice happy to carry this roof that protects your backs! Oh! creatures full of sense! what a happy thought to cover your bodies with this shell, which shields it from blows! As for me, I can no longer move; the stick has so belaboured my body.

CHORUS. Eh, what's the matter, child? for, old as he may be, one has the right to call anyone a child who has let himself be beaten.

XANTHIAS. Alas! my master is really the worst of all plagues. He was the most drunk of all the guests, and yet among them were Hippyllus, Antiphon, Lycon, Lysistratus, Theophrastus and Phrynichus. But he was a hundred times more insolent than any. As soon as he had stuffed himself with a host of good dishes, he began to leap and spring, to laugh and to let wind like a little ass well blown out with barley. Then he set to a-beating me with all his heart, shouting, "Slave! slave!" Lysistratus, as soon as he saw him, let fly this comparison at him. "Old fellow," said he, "you resemble one of the scum assuming the airs of a rich man or a stupid ass that has broken loose from its stable." "As for you," bawled the other at the top of his voice, "you are like a grasshopper, whose cloak is worn to the thread, or like Sthenelus after his clothes had been sold." All applauded excepting Theophrastus, who made a grimace as behoved a well-bred man like him. The old man called to him, "Hi! tell me then what you have to be proud of?

Not so much mouthing, you, who so well know how to play the buffoon and to lick-spittle the rich!" 'Twas thus he insulted each in turn with the grossest of jests, and he reeled off a thousand of the most absurd and ridiculous speeches. At last, when he was thoroughly drunk, he started towards here, striking everyone he met. Hold, here he comes reeling along. I will be off for fear of his blows.

PHILOCLEON. Halt! and let everyone begone, or I shall do an evil turn to some of those who insist on following me. Clear off, rascals, or I shall roast you with this torch!

BDELYCLEON. We shall all make you smart to-morrow for your youthful pranks. We shall come in a body to summon you to justice.

PHILOCLEON. Ho! ho! summon me! what old women's babble! Know that I can no longer bear to hear even the name of suits. Ha! ha! ha! this is what pleases *me*, "Down with the urns!" Won't you begone? Down with the dicasts! away with them, away with them! *(To the flute-girl.)* Mount up there, my little gilded cock-chafer; seize hold of this rope's end in your hand. Hold it tight, but have a care; the rope's a bit old and worn, but it loves a nice rubbing still. Do you see how opportunely I got you away from the solicitations of those fellows, who wanted to make you work their tools in your mouth? You therefore owe me this return to gratify mine by masturbating it. But will you pay the debt? Oh! I know well you will not even try; you will play with me, you will laugh heartily at my poor old weapon as you have done at many another man's. And yet, if you would not be a naughty girl, I would redeem you, when my son is dead, and you should be my concubine, my little cuntling. At present I am not my own master; I am very young and am watched very closely. My dear son never lets me out of his sight; 'tis an unbearable creature, who would quarter a thread and skin a flint; he is afraid I should get lost, for I am his only father. But here he comes running towards us. But be quick, don't stir, hold these torches. I am going to play him a young man's trick, the same as he played me before I was initiated into the mysteries.

BDELYCLEON. Oh! oh! you debauched old dotard! you desire and, meseems, you love pretty baggages; but, by Apollo, it shall not be with impunity!

PHILOCLEON. Ah! you would be very glad to eat a lawsuit in vinegar, you would.

BDELYCLEON. ’Tis a rascally trick to steal the flute-girl away from the other guests.

PHILOCLEON. What flute-girl? Are you distraught, as if you had just returned from Pluto?

BDELYCLEON. By Zeus! But here is the Dardanian wench in person.

PHILOCLEON. Nonsense. This is a torch that I have lit in the public square in honour of the gods.

BDELYCLEON. Is this a torch?

PHILOCLEON. A torch? Certainly. Do you not see it is of several different colours?

BDELYCLEON. And what is that black part in the middle?

PHILOCLEON. ’Tis the pitch running out while it burns.

BDELYCLEON. And there, on the other side, surely that is a girl’s bottom?

PHILOCLEON. No. ’Tis a small bit of the torch, that projects.

BDELYCLEON. What do you mean? what bit? Hi! you woman! come here!

PHILOCLEON. Ah! ah! What do you want to do?

BDELYCLEON. To take her from you and lead her away. You are too much worn out and can do nothing.

PHILOCLEON. Hear me! One day, at Olympia, I saw Euphudion boxing bravely against Ascondas; he was already aged, and yet with a blow from his fist he knocked down his young opponent. So beware lest I blacken *your* eyes.

BDELYCLEON. By Zeus! you have Olympia at your finger-ends!

A BAKER’S WIFE *(to Bdelycleon)*. Come to my help, I beg you, in the name of the gods! This cursed man, when striking out right and left with his torch, knocked over ten loaves worth an obolus apiece, and then, to cap the deal, four others.

BDELYCLEON. Do you see what lawsuits you are drawing upon yourself with your drunkenness? You will have to plead.

PHILOCLEON. Oh, no, no! a little pretty talk and pleasant tales will soon settle the matter and reconcile her with me.

BAKER'S WIFE. Not so, by the goddesses twain! It shall not be said that you have with impunity spoilt the wares of Myrtia, the daughter of Ancylion and Sostraté.

PHILOCLEON. Listen, woman, I wish to tell you a lovely anecdote.

BAKER'S WIFE. Oh! friend, no anecdotes for me, thank you.

PHILOCLEON. One night Aesop was going out to supper. A drunken bitch had the impudence to bark near him. Aesop said to her, "Oh, bitch, bitch! you would do well to sell your wicked tongue and buy some wheat."

BAKER'S WIFE. You make a mock of me! Very well! Be you who you like, I shall summons you before the market inspectors for damage done to my business. Chaerephon here shall be my witness.

PHILOCLEON. But just listen, here's another will perhaps please you better. Lasus and Simonides were contesting against each other for the singing prize. Lasus said, "Damn me if I care."

BAKER'S WIFE. Ah! really, did he now!

PHILOCLEON. As for you, Chaerephon, *can* you be witness to this woman, who looks as pale and tragic as Ino when she throws herself from her rock … at the feet of Euripides?

BDELYCLEON. Here, methinks, comes another to summons you; *he* has his witness too. Ah! unhappy indeed we are!

ACCUSER. I summons you, old man, for outrage.

BDELYCLEON. For outrage? Oh! in the name of the gods, do not summons him! I will be answerable for him; name the penalty and I will be more grateful still.

PHILOCLEON. I ask for nothing better than to be reconciled with him; for I admit I struck him and threw stones at him. So, first come here. Will you leave it in my hands to name the indemnity I must pay, if I promise you my friendship as well, or will you fix it yourself?

ACCUSER. Fix it; I like neither lawsuits nor disputes.

PHILOCLEON. A man of Sybaris fell from his chariot and wounded his head most severely; he was a very poor driver. One of his friends came up to him and said, "Every man to his trade." Well then, go you to Pittalus to get mended.

BDELYCLEON. You are incorrigible.

ACCUSER *(to his witness)*. At all events, make a note of his reply.

PHILOCLEON. Listen, instead of going off so abruptly. A woman at Sybaris broke a box.

ACCUSER *(to his witness)*. I again ask you to witness this.

PHILOCLEON. The box therefore had the fact attested, but the woman said, "Never worry about witnessing the matter, but hurry off to buy a cord to tie it together with; 'twill be the more sensible course."

ACCUSER. Oh! go on with your ribaldry until the Archon calls the case.

BDELYCLEON *(to Philocleon)*. No, by Demeter! you stay here no longer! I take you and carry you off.

PHILOCLEON. And what for?

BDELYCLEON. What for? I shall carry you to the house; else there would not be enough witnesses for the accusers.

PHILOCLEON. One day at Delphi, Aesop …

BDELYCLEON. I don't care a fig for that.

PHILOCLEON. … was accused of having stolen a sacred vase. But he replied, that the horn beetle … *(Philocleon goes on with his fable while Bdelycleon is*

carrying him off the scene by main force.)

BDELYCLEON. Oh, dear, dear! You drive me crazy with your horn-beetle.

CHORUS. I envy you your happiness, old man. What a contrast to his former frugal habits and his very hard life! Taught now in quite another school, he will know nothing but the pleasures of ease. Perhaps he will jib at it, for indeed 'tis difficult to renounce what has become one's second nature. However, many have done it, and adopting the ideas of others, have changed their use and wont. As for Philocleon's son, I, like all wise and judicious men, cannot sufficiently praise his filial tenderness and his tact. Never have I met a more amiable nature, and I have conceived the greatest fondness for him. How he triumphed on every point in his discussion with his father, when he wanted to bring him back to more worthy and honourable tastes!

XANTHIAS. By Bacchus! 'Tis some Evil Genius has brought this unbearable disorder into our house. The old man, full up with wine and excited by the sound of the flute, is so delighted, so enraptured, that he spends the night executing the old dances that Thespis first produced on the stage, and just now he offered to prove to the modern tragedians, by disputing with them for the dancing prize, that they are nothing but a lot of old dotards.

PHILOCLEON. "Who loiters at the door of the vestibule?"

XANTHIAS. Here comes our pest, our plague!

PHILOCLEON. Let down the barriers. The dance is now to begin.

XANTHIAS. Or rather the madness.

PHILOCLEON. Impetuous movement already twists and racks my sides. How my nostrils wheeze! how my back cracks!

XANTHIAS. Go and fill yourself with hellebore.

PHILOCLEON. Phrynichus is as bold as a cock and terrifies his rivals.

XANTHIAS. Oh! oh! have a care he does not kick you.

PHILOCLEON. His leg kicks out sky-high, and his arse gapes open.

XANTHIAS. Do have a care.

PHILOCLEON. Look how easily my leg-joints move.

BDELYCLEON. Great gods! What does all this mean? Is it actual, downright madness?

PHILOCLEON. And now I summon and challenge my rivals. If there be a tragic poet who pretends to be a skilful dancer, let him come and contest the matter with me. Is there one? Is there *not* one?

BDELYCLEON. Here comes one, and one only.

PHILOCLEON. Who is the wretch?

BDELYCLEON. 'Tis the younger son of Carcinus.

PHILOCLEON. I will crush him to nothing; in point of keeping time, I will knock him out, for he knows nothing of rhythm.

BDELYCLEON. Ah! ah! here comes his brother too, another tragedian, and another son of Carcinus.

PHILOCLEON. Him I will devour for my dinner.

BDELYCLEON. Oh! ye gods! I see nothing but crabs. Here is yet another son of Carcinus.

PHILOCLEON. What is't comes here? A shrimp or a spider?

BDELYCLEON. 'Tis a crab, — a crabkin, the smallest of its kind; he writes tragedies.

PHILOCLEON. Oh! Carcinus, how proud you should be of your brood! What a crowd of kinglets have come swooping down here!

BDELYCLEON. Come, come, my poor father, you will have to measure yourself against them.

PHILOCLEON. Have pickle prepared for seasoning them, if I am bound to prove the victor.

CHORUS. Let us stand out of the way a little, so that they may twirl at their ease. Come, illustrious children of this inhabitant of the briny, brothers of the shrimps, skip on the sand and the shore of the barren sea; show us the lightning whirls and twirls of your nimble limbs. Glorious offspring of Phrynichus, let fly your kicks, so that the spectators may be overjoyed at seeing your legs so high in air. Twist, twirl, tap your bellies, kick your legs to the sky. Here comes your famous father, the ruler of the sea, delighted to see his three lecherous kinglets. Go on with your dancing, if it pleases you, but as for us, we shall not join you. Lead us promptly off the stage, for never a Comedy yet was seen where the Chorus finished off with a dance.

PEACE

Anonymous translation for the Athenian Society, London, 1912

Peace won second prize at the City Dionysia where it was staged just a few days before the Peace of Nicias, promising the war-wearied citizens of Athens an end to the ten year Peloponnesian War, which was validated in 421 BC. The comedy is notable for its joyous anticipation of peace and its celebration of rural pleasures that had been denied to the Athenians so long due to the ongoing conflict with Sparta. Once again, Cleon, the pro-war populist leader of Athens, is a target for Aristophanes' wit, even though he had died in battle a few months earlier.

The play concerns Trygaeus, a middle-aged Athenian that miraculously brings about a peaceful end to the Peloponnesian War, earning the gratitude of farmers while bankrupting various tradesmen who had profited from the war. Trygaeus celebrates his triumph by marrying Harvest, a companion of Festival and Peace, all of whom he has liberated from a celestial prison.

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INTRODUCTION

The ‘Peace’ was brought out four years after ‘The Acharnians’ *(422 B.C.)*, when the War had already lasted ten years. The leading motive is the same as in the former play — the intense desire of the less excitable and more moderate-minded citizens for relief from the miseries of war.

Trygaeus, a rustic patriot, finding no help in men, resolves to ascend to heaven to expostulate personally with Zeus for allowing this wretched state of things to continue. With this object he has fed and trained a gigantic dung-beetle, which he mounts, and is carried, like Bellerophon on Pegasus, on an aerial journey. Eventually he reaches Olympus, only to find that the gods have gone elsewhere, and that the heavenly abode is occupied solely by the demon of War, who is busy pounding up the Greek States in a huge mortar. However, his benevolent purpose is not in vain; for learning from Hermes that the goddess Peace has been cast into a pit, where she is kept a fast prisoner, he calls upon the different peoples of Hellas to make a united effort and rescue her, and with their help drags her out and brings her back in triumph to earth. The play concludes with the restoration of the goddess to her ancient honours, the festivities of the rustic population and the nuptials of Trygaeus with Opora *(Harvest)*, handmaiden of Peace, represented as a pretty courtesan.

Such references as there are to Cleon in this play are noteworthy. The great Demagogue was now dead, having fallen in the same action as the rival Spartan general, the renowned Brasidas, before Amphipolis, and whatever Aristophanes says here of his old enemy is conceived in the spirit of ‘de mortuis nil nisi bonum.’ In one scene Hermes is descanting on the evils which had nearly ruined Athens and declares that ‘The Tanner’ was the cause of them all. But Trygaeus interrupts him with the words:

“Hold — say not so, good master Hermes;
Let the man rest in peace where now he lies.
He is no longer of our world, but yours.”

Here surely we have a trait of magnanimity on the author’s part as admirable in its way as the wit and boldness of his former attacks had been in theirs.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

TRYGAEUS.
TWO SERVANTS of TRYGAEUS.
MAIDENS, Daughters of TRYGAEUS.
HERMES.
WAR.
TUMULT.
HIEROCLES, a Soothsayer.
A SICKLE-MAKER.
A CREST-MAKER.
A TRUMPET-MAKER.
A HELMET-MAKER.
A SPEAR-MAKER.
SON OF LAMACHUS.
SON OF CLEONYMUS.
CHORUS OF HUSBANDMEN.

SCENE: A farmyard, two slaves busy beside a dungheap; afterwards, in Olympus.

PEACE

FIRST SERVANT. Quick, quick, bring the dung-beetle his cake.

SECOND SERVANT. Coming, coming.

FIRST SERVANT. Give it to him, and may it kill him!

SECOND SERVANT. May he never eat a better.

FIRST SERVANT. Now give him this other one kneaded up with ass's dung.

SECOND SERVANT. There! I've done that too.

FIRST SERVANT. And where's what you gave him just now; surely he can't have devoured it yet!

SECOND SERVANT. Indeed he has; he snatched it, rolled it between his feet and boiled it.

FIRST SERVANT. Come, hurry up, knead up a lot and knead them stiffly.

SECOND SERVANT. Oh, scavengers, help me in the name of the gods, if you do not wish to see me fall down choked.

FIRST SERVANT. Come, come, another made of the stool of a young scapegrace catamite. 'Twill be to the beetle's taste; he likes it well ground.

SECOND SERVANT. There! I am free at least from suspicion; none will accuse me of tasting what I mix.

FIRST SERVANT. Faugh! come, now another! keep on mixing with all your might.

SECOND SERVANT. I' faith, no. I can stand this awful cesspool stench no longer, so I bring you the whole ill-smelling gear.

FIRST SERVANT. Pitch it down the sewer sooner, and yourself with it.

SECOND SERVANT. Maybe, one of you can tell me where I can buy a stopped-up nose, for there is no work more disgusting than to mix food for a beetle and to carry it to him. A pig or a dog will at least pounce upon our excrement without more ado, but this foul wretch affects the disdainful, the spoilt mistress, and won't eat unless I offer him a cake that has been kneaded for an entire day…. But let us open the door a bit ajar without his seeing it. Has he done eating? Come, pluck up courage, cram yourself till you burst! The cursed creature! It wallows in its food! It grips it between its claws like a wrestler clutching his opponent, and with head and feet together rolls up its paste like a ropemaker twisting a hawser. What an indecent, stinking, gluttonous beast! I know not what angry god let this monster loose upon us, but of a certainty it was neither Aphrodité nor the Graces.

FIRST SERVANT. Who was it then?

SECOND SERVANT. No doubt the Thunderer, Zeus.

FIRST SERVANT. But perhaps some spectator, some beardless youth, who thinks himself a sage, will say, "What is this? What does the beetle mean?" And then an Ionian, sitting next him, will add, "I think 'tis an allusion to Cleon, who so shamelessly feeds on filth all by himself." — But now I'm going indoors to fetch the beetle a drink.

SECOND SERVANT. As for me, I will explain the matter to you all, children, youths, grown-ups and old men, aye, even to the decrepit dotards. My master is mad, not as you are, but with another sort of madness, quite a new kind. The livelong day he looks open-mouthed towards heaven and never stops addressing Zeus. "Ah! Zeus," he cries, "what are thy intentions? Lay aside thy besom; do not sweep Greece away!"

TRYGAEUS. Ah! ah! ah!

FIRST SERVANT. Hush, hush! Methinks I hear his voice!

TRYGAEUS. Oh! Zeus, what art thou going to do for our people? Dost thou not see this, that our cities will soon be but empty husks?

FIRST SLAVE. As I told you, that is his form of madness. There you have a sample of his follies. When his trouble first began to seize him, he said to himself, "By what means could I go straight to Zeus?" Then he made himself

very slender little ladders and so clambered up towards heaven; but he soon came hurtling down again and broke his head. Yesterday, to our misfortune, he went out and brought us back this thoroughbred, but from where I know not, this great beetle, whose groom he has forced me to become. He himself caresses it as though it were a horse, saying, "Oh! my little Pegasus, my noble aerial steed, may your wings soon bear me straight to Zeus!" But what is my master doing? I must stoop down to look through this hole. Oh! great gods! Here! neighbours, run here quick! here is my master flying off mounted on his beetle as if on horseback.

TRYGAEUS. Gently, gently, go easy, beetle; don't start off so proudly, or trust at first too greatly to your powers; wait till you have sweated, till the beating of your wings shall make your limb joints supple. Above all things, don't let off some foul smell, I adjure you; else I would rather have you stop in the stable altogether.

SECOND SERVANT. Poor master! Is he crazy?

TRYGAEUS. Silence! silence!

SECOND SERVANT *(to Trygaeus)*. But why start up into the air on chance?

TRYGAEUS. 'Tis for the weal of all the Greeks; I am attempting a daring and novel feat.

SECOND SERVANT. But what is your purpose? What useless folly!

TRYGAEUS. No words of ill omen! Give vent to joy and command all men to keep silence, to close down their drains and privies with new tiles and to stop their own vent-holes.

FIRST SERVANT. No, I shall not be silent, unless you tell me where you are going.

TRYGAEUS. Why, where am I likely to be going across the sky, if it be not to visit Zeus?

FIRST SERVANT. For what purpose?

TRYGAEUS. I want to ask him what he reckons to do for all the Greeks.

SECOND SERVANT. And if he doesn't tell you?

TRYGAEUS. I shall pursue him at law as a traitor who sells Greece to the Medes.

SECOND SERVANT. Death seize me, if I let you go.

TRYGAEUS. It is absolutely necessary.

SECOND SERVANT. Alas! alas! dear little girls, your father is deserting you secretly to go to heaven. Ah! poor orphans, entreat him, beseech him.

LITTLE DAUGHTER. Father! father! what is this I hear? Is it true? What! you would leave me, you would vanish into the sky, you would go to the crows? 'Tis impossible! Answer, father, an you love me.

TRYGAEUS. Yes, I am going. You hurt me too sorely, my daughters, when you ask me for bread, calling me your daddy, and there is not the ghost of an obolus in the house; if I succeed and come back, you will have a barley loaf every morning — and a punch in the eye for sauce!

LITTLE DAUGHTER. But how will you make the journey? 'Tis not a ship that will carry you thither.

TRYGAEUS. No, but this winged steed will.

LITTLE DAUGHTER. But what an idea, daddy, to harness a beetle, on which to fly to the gods.

TRYGAEUS. We see from Aesop's fables that they alone can fly to the abode of the Immortals.

LITTLE DAUGHTER. Father, father, 'tis a tale nobody can believe! that such a stinking creature can have gone to the gods.

TRYGAEUS. It went to have vengeance on the eagle and break its eggs.

LITTLE DAUGHTER. Why not saddle Pegasus? you would have a more *tragic* appearance in the eyes of the gods.

TRYGAEUS. Eh! don't you see, little fool, that then twice the food would be wanted? Whereas my beetle devours again as filth what I have eaten myself.

LITTLE DAUGHTER. And if it fell into the watery depths of the sea, could it escape with its wings?

TRYGAEUS *(showing his penis)*. I am fitted with a rudder in case of need, and my Naxos beetle will serve me as a boat.

LITTLE DAUGHTER. And what harbour will you put in at?

TRYGAEUS. Why, is there not the harbour of Cantharos at the Piraeus?

LITTLE DAUGHTER. Take care not to knock against anything and so fall off into space; once a cripple, you would be a fit subject for Euripides, who would put you into a tragedy.

TRYGAEUS. I'll see to it. Good-bye! *(To the Athenians.)* You, for love of whom I brave these dangers, do ye neither let wind nor go to stool for the space of three days, for, if, while cleaving the air, my steed should scent anything, he would fling me head foremost from the summit of my hopes. Now come, my Pegasus, get a-going with up-pricked ears and make your golden bridle resound gaily. Eh! what are you doing? What are you up to? Do you turn your nose towards the cesspools? Come, pluck up a spirit; rush upwards from the earth, stretch out your speedy wings and make straight for the palace of Zeus; for once give up foraging in your daily food. — Hi! you down there, what are you after now? Oh! my god! 'tis a man emptying his belly in the Piraeus, close to the house where the bad girls are. But is it my death you seek then, my death? Will you not bury that right away and pile a great heap of earth upon it and plant wild thyme therein and pour perfumes on it? If I were to fall from up here and misfortune happened to me, the town of Chioswould owe a fine of five talents for my death, all along of your cursed rump. Alas! how frightened I am! oh! I have no heart for jests. Ah! machinist, take great care of me. There is already a wind whirling round my navel; take great care or, from sheer fright, I shall form food for my beetle…. But I think I am no longer far from the gods; aye, that is the dwelling of Zeus, I perceive. Hullo! Hi! where is the doorkeeper? Will no one open?

*

The scene changes and heaven is presented.

HERMES. Meseems I can sniff a man. *(He perceives Trygaeus astride his beetle.)* Why, what plague is this?

TRYGAEUS. A horse-beetle.

HERMES. Oh! impudent, shameless rascal! oh! scoundrel! triple scoundrel! the greatest scoundrel in the world! how did you come here? Oh! scoundrel of all scoundrels! your name? Reply.

TRYGAEUS. Triple scoundrel.

HERMES. Your country?

TRYGAEUS. Triple scoundrel.

HERMES. Your father?

TRYGAEUS. My father? Triple scoundrel.

HERMES. By the Earth, you shall die, unless you tell me your name.

TRYGAEUS. I am Trygaeus of the Athmonian deme, a good vine-dresser, little addicted to quibbling and not at all an informer.

HERMES. Why do you come?

TRYGAEUS. I come to bring you this meat.

HERMES. Ah! my good friend, did you have a good journey?

TRYGAEUS. Glutton, be off! I no longer seem a triple scoundrel to you.
Come, call Zeus.

HERMES. Ah! ah! you are a long way yet from reaching the gods, for they moved yesterday.

TRYGAEUS. To what part of the earth?

HERMES. Eh! of the earth, did you say?

TRYGAEUS. In short, where are they then?

HERMES. Very far, very far, right at the furthest end of the dome of heaven.

TRYGAEUS. But why have they left you all alone here?

HERMES. I am watching what remains of the furniture, the little pots and pans, the bits of chairs and tables, and odd wine-jars.

TRYGAEUS. And why have the gods moved away?

HERMES. Because of their wrath against the Greeks. They have located War in the house they occupied themselves and have given him full power to do with you exactly as he pleases; then they went as high up as ever they could, so as to see no more of your fights and to hear no more of your prayers.

TRYGAEUS. What reason have they for treating us so?

HERMES. Because they have afforded you an opportunity for peace more than once, but you have always preferred war. If the Laconians got the very slightest advantage, they would exclaim, “By the Twin Brethren! the Athenians shall smart for this.” If, on the contrary, the latter triumphed and the Laconians came with peace proposals, you would say, “By Demeter, they want to deceive us. No, by Zeus, we will not hear a word; they will always be coming as long as we hold Pylos.”

TRYGAEUS. Yes, that is quite the style our folk do talk in.

HERMES. So that I don’t know whether you will ever see Peace again.

TRYGAEUS. Why, where has she gone to then?

HERMES. War has cast her into a deep pit.

TRYGAEUS. Where?

HERMES. Down there, at the very bottom. And you see what heaps of stones he has piled over the top, so that you should never pull her out again.

TRYGAEUS. Tell me, what is War preparing against us?

HERMES. All I know is that last evening he brought along a huge mortar.

TRYGAEUS. And what is he going to do with his mortar?

HERMES. He wants to pound up all the cities of Greece in it…. But I must say good-bye, for I think he is coming out; what an uproar he is making!

TRYGAEUS. Ah! great gods! let us seek safety; meseems I already hear the noise of this fearful war mortar.

WAR *(enters carrying a mortar)*. Oh! mortals, mortals, wretched mortals, how your jaws will snap!

TRYGAEUS. Oh! divine Apollo! what a prodigious big mortar! Oh, what misery the very sight of War causes me! This then is the foe from whom I fly, who is so cruel, so formidable, so stalwart, so solid on his legs!

WAR. Oh! Prasiae! thrice wretched, five times, aye, a thousand times wretched! for thou shalt be destroyed this day.

TRYGAEUS. This does not yet concern us over much; 'tis only so much the worse for the Laconians.

WAR. Oh! Megara! Megara! how utterly are you going to be ground up! what fine mincemeat are you to be made into!

TRYGAEUS. Alas! alas! what bitter tears there will be among the Megarians!

WAR. Oh, Sicily! you too must perish! Your wretched towns shall be grated like this cheese. Now let us pour some Attic honey into the mortar.

TRYGAEUS. Oh! I beseech you! use some other honey; this kind is worth four obols; be careful, oh! be careful of our Attic honey.

WAR. Hi! Tumult, you slave there!

TUMULT. What do you want?

WAR. Out upon you! You stand there with folded arms. Take this cuff o' the

head for your pains.

TUMULT. Oh! how it stings! Master, have you got garlic in your fist, I wonder?

WAR. Run and fetch me a pestle.

TUMULT. But we haven't got one; 'twas only yesterday we moved.

WAR. Go and fetch me one from Athens, and hurry, hurry!

TUMULT. Aye, I hasten there; if I return without one, I shall have no cause for laughing. [*Exit.*

TRYGAEUS. Ah! what is to become of us, wretched mortals that we are? See the danger that threatens if he returns with the pestle, for War will quietly amuse himself with pounding all the towns of Hellas to pieces. Ah! Bacchus! cause this herald of evil to perish on his road!

WAR. Well!

TUMULT *(who has returned)*. Well, what?

WAR. You have brought back nothing?

TUMULT. Alas! the Athenians have lost their pestle — the tanner, who ground Greece to powder.

TRYGAEUS. Oh! Athené, venerable mistress! 'tis well for our city he is dead, and before he could serve us with this hash.

WAR. Then go and seek one at Sparta and have done with it!

TUMULT. Aye, aye, master!

WAR. Be back as quick as ever you can.

TRYGAEUS *(to the audience)*. What is going to happen, friends? 'Tis a critical hour. Ah! if there is some initiate of Samothrace among you, 'tis surely the moment to wish this messenger some accident — some sprain or strain.

TUMULT *(who returns)*. Alas! alas! thrice again, alas!

WAR. What is it? Again you come back without it?

TUMULT. The Spartans too have lost their pestle.

WAR. How, varlet?

TUMULT. They had lent it to their allies in Thrace, who have lost it for them.

TRYGAEUS. Long life to you, Thracians! My hopes revive, pluck up courage, mortals!

WAR. Take all this stuff away; I am going in to make a pestle for myself.

TRYGAEUS. 'Tis now the time to sing as Datis did, as he masturbated himself at high noon, "Oh pleasure! oh enjoyment! oh delights!" 'Tis now, oh Greeks! the moment when freed of quarrels and fighting, we should rescue sweet Peace and draw her out of this pit, before some other pestle prevents us. Come, labourers, merchants, workmen, artisans, strangers, whether you be domiciled or not, islanders, come here, Greeks of all countries, come hurrying here with picks and levers and ropes! 'Tis the moment to drain a cup in honour of the Good Genius.

CHORUS. Come hither, all! quick, quick, hasten to the rescue! All peoples of Greece, now is the time or never, for you to help each other. You see yourselves freed from battles and all their horrors of bloodshed. The day, hateful to Lamachus, has come. Come then, what must be done? Give your orders, direct us, for I swear to work this day without ceasing, until with the help of our levers and our engines we have drawn back into light the greatest of all goddesses, her to whom the olive is so dear.

TRYGAEUS. Silence! if War should hear your shouts of joy he would bound forth from his retreat in fury.

CHORUS. Such a decree overwhelms us with joy; how different to the edict, which bade us muster with provisions for three days.

TRYGAEUS. Let us beware lest the cursed Cerberus prevent us even from the nethermost hell from delivering the goddess by his furious howling, just as he did when on earth.

CHORUS. Once we have hold of her, none in the world will be able to take her from us. Huzza! huzza!

TRYGAEUS. You will work my death if you don't subdue your shouts. War will come running out and trample everything beneath his feet.

CHORUS. Well then! *Let* him confound, let him trample, let him overturn everything! We cannot help giving vent to our joy.

TRYGAEUS. Oh! cruel fate! My friends! in the name of the gods, what possesses you? Your dancing will wreck the success of a fine undertaking.

CHORUS. 'Tis not I who want to dance; 'tis my legs that bound with delight.

TRYGAEUS. Enough, an you love me, cease your gambols.

CHORUS. There! Tis over.

TRYGAEUS. You say so, and nevertheless you go on.

CHORUS. Yet one more figure and 'tis done.

TRYGAEUS. Well, just this one; then you must dance no more.

CHORUS. No, no more dancing, if we can help you.

TRYGAEUS. But look, you are not stopping even now.

CHORUS. By Zeus, I am only throwing up my right leg, that's all.

TRYGAEUS. Come, I grant you that, but pray, annoy me no further.

CHORUS. Ah! the left leg too will have its fling; well, 'tis but its right. I am so happy, so delighted at not having to carry my buckler any more. I sing and I laugh more than if I had cast my old age, as a serpent does its skin.

TRYGAEUS. No, 'tis no time for joy yet, for you are not sure of success. But when you have got the goddess, then rejoice, shout and laugh; thenceforward you will be able to sail or stay at home, to make love or sleep, to attend festivals and processions, to play at cottabos, live like true Sybarites and to shout, Io, io!

CHORUS. Ah! God grant we may see the blessed day. I have suffered so much; have so oft slept with Phormio on hard beds. You will no longer find me an acid, angry, hard judge as heretofore, but will find me turned indulgent and grown younger by twenty years through happiness. We have been killing ourselves long enough, tiring ourselves out with going to the Lyceum and returning laden with spear and buckler. — But what can we do to please you? Come, speak; for 'tis a good Fate, that has named you our leader.

TRYGAEUS. How shall we set about removing these stones?

HERMES. Rash reprobate, what do you propose doing?

TRYGAEUS. Nothing bad, as Cillicon said.

HERMES. You are undone, you wretch.

TRYGAEUS. Yes, if the lot had to decide my life, for Hermes would know how to turn the chance.

HERMES. You are lost, you are dead.

TRYGAEUS. On what day?

HERMES. This instant.

TRYGAEUS. But I have not provided myself with flour and cheese yet to start for death.

HERMES. You *are* kneaded and ground already, I tell you.

TRYGAEUS. Hah! I have not yet tasted that gentle pleasure.

HERMES. Don't you know that Zeus has decreed death for him who is surprised exhuming Peace?

TRYGAEUS. What! must I really and truly die?

HERMES. You must.

TRYGAEUS. Well then, lend me three drachmae to buy a young pig; I wish to have myself initiated before I die.

HERMES. Oh! Zeus, the Thunderer!

TRYGAEUS. I adjure you in the name of the gods, master, don't denounce us!

HERMES. I may not, I cannot keep silent.

TRYGAEUS. In the name of the meats which I brought you so good-naturedly.

HERMES. Why, wretched man, Zeus will annihilate me, if I do not shout out at the top of my voice, to inform him what you are plotting.

TRYGAEUS. Oh, no! don't shout, I beg you, dear little Hermes…. And what are you doing, comrades? You stand there as though you were stocks and stones. Wretched men, speak, entreat him at once; otherwise he will be shouting.

CHORUS. Oh! mighty Hermes! don't do it; no, don't do it! If ever you have eaten some young pig, sacrificed by us on your altars, with pleasure, may this offering not be without value in your sight to-day.

TRYGAEUS. Do you not hear them wheedling you, mighty god?

CHORUS. Be not pitiless toward our prayers; permit us to deliver the goddess. Oh! the most human, the most generous of the gods, be favourable toward us, if it be true that you detest the haughty crests and proud brows of Pisander; we shall never cease, oh master, offering you sacred victims and solemn prayers.

TRYGAEUS. Have mercy, mercy, let yourself be touched by their words; never was your worship so dear to them as to-day.

HERMES. I' truth, never have you been greater thieves.

TRYGAEUS. I will reveal a great, a terrible conspiracy against the gods to you.

HERMES. Hah! speak and perchance I shall let myself be softened.

TRYGAEUS. Know then, that the Moon and that infamous Sun are plotting against you, and want to deliver Greece into the hands of the Barbarians.

HERMES. What for?

TRYGAEUS. Because it is to you that we sacrifice, whereas the barbarians

worship them; hence they would like to see you destroyed, that they alone might receive the offerings.

HERMES. 'Tis then for this reason that these untrustworthy charioteers have for so long been defrauding us, one of them robbing us of daylight and the other nibbling away at the other's disk.

TRYGAEUS. Yes, certainly. So therefore, Hermes, my friend, help us with your whole heart to find and deliver the captive and we will celebrate the great Panathenaea in your honour as well as all the festivals of the other gods; for Hermes shall be the Mysteries, the Dipolia, the Adonia; everywhere the towns, freed from their miseries, will sacrifice to Hermes, the Liberator; you will be loaded with benefits of every kind, and to start with, I offer you this cup for libations as your first present.

HERMES. Ah! how golden cups do influence me! Come, friends, get to work.
To the pit quickly, pick in hand and drag away the stones.

CHORUS. We go, but you, the cleverest of all the gods, supervise our labours; tell us, good workman as you are, what we must do; we shall obey your orders with alacrity.

TRYGAEUS. Quick, reach me your cup, and let us preface our work by addressing prayers to the gods.

HERMES. Oh! sacred, sacred libations! Keep silence, oh! ye people! keep silence!

TRYGAEUS. Let us offer our libations and our prayers, so that this day may begin an era of unalloyed happiness for Greece and that he who has bravely pulled at the rope with us may never resume his buckler.

CHORUS. Aye, may we pass our lives in peace, caressing our mistresses and poking the fire.

TRYGAEUS. May he who would prefer the war, oh Dionysus, be ever drawing barbed arrows out of his elbows.

CHORUS. If there be a citizen, greedy for military rank and honours, who refuses, oh, divine Peace! to restore you to daylight, may he behave as cowardly

as Cleonymus on the battlefield.

TRYGAEUS. If a lance-maker or a dealer in shields desires war for the sake of better trade, may he be taken by pirates and eat nothing but barley.

CHORUS. If some ambitious man does not help us, because he wants to become a General, or if a slave is plotting to pass over to the enemy, let his limbs be broken on the wheel, may he be beaten to death with rods! As for us, may Fortune favour us! Io! Paean, Io!

TRYGAEUS. Don't say Paean, but simply, Io.

CHORUS. Very well, then! Io! Io! I'll simply say, Io!

TRYGAEUS. To Hermes, the Graces, Hora, Aphrodité, Eros!

CHORUS. And not to Ares?

TRYGAEUS. No.

CHORUS. Nor doubtless to Enyalius?

TRYGAEUS. No.

CHORUS. Come, all strain at the ropes to tear away the stones. Pull!

HERMES. Heave away, heave, heave, oh!

CHORUS. Come, pull harder, harder.

HERMES. Heave away, heave, heave, oh!

CHORUS. Still harder, harder still.

HERMES. Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave, heave, oh!

TRYGAEUS. Come, come, there is no working together. Come! all pull at the same instant! you Boeotians are only pretending. Beware!

HERMES. Come, heave away, heave!

CHORUS. Hi! you two pull as well.

TRYGAEUS. Why, I am pulling, I am hanging on to the rope and straining till I am almost off my feet; I am working with all my might.

HERMES. Why does not the work advance then?

TRYGAEUS. Lamachus, this is too bad! You are in the way, sitting there.
We have no use for your Medusa's head, friend.

HERMES. But hold, the Argives have not pulled the least bit; they have done nothing but laugh at us for our pains while they were getting gain with both hands.

TRYGAEUS. Ah! my dear sir, the Laconians at all events pull with vigour.

CHORUS. But look! only those among them who generally hold the plough-tail show any zeal, while the armourers impede them in their efforts.

HERMES. And the Megarians too are doing nothing, yet look how they are pulling and showing their teeth like famished curs; the poor wretches are dying of hunger!

TRYGAEUS. This won't do, friends. Come! all together! Everyone to the work and with a good heart for the business.

HERMES. Heave away, heave!

TRYGAEUS. Harder!

HERMES. Heave away, heave!

TRYGAEUS. Come on then, by heaven.

HERMES. Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave!

CHORUS. This will never do.

TRYGAEUS. Is it not a shame? some pull one way and others another. You, Argives there, beware of a thrashing!

HERMES. Come, put your strength into it.

TRYGAEUS. Heave away, heave!

CHORUS. There are many ill-disposed folk among us.

TRYGAEUS. Do you at least, who long for peace, pull heartily.

CHORUS. But there are some who prevent us.

HERMES. Off to the Devil with you, Megarians! The goddess hates you. She recollects that you were the first to rub her the wrong way. Athenians, you are not well placed for pulling. There you are too busy with law-suits; if you really want to free the goddess, get down a little towards the sea.

CHORUS. Come, friends, none but husbandmen on the rope.

HERMES. Ah! that will do ever so much better.

CHORUS. He says the thing is going well. Come, all of you, together and with a will.

TRYGAEUS. 'Tis the husbandmen who are doing all the work.

CHORUS. Come then, come, and all together! Hah! hah! at last there is some unanimity in the work. Don't let us give up, let us redouble our efforts. There! now we have it! Come then, all together! Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave! All together! *(Peace is drawn out of the pit.)* TRYGAEUS. Oh! venerated goddess, who givest us our grapes, where am I to find the ten-thousand-gallon words wherewith to greet thee? I have none such at home. Oh! hail to thee, Opora, and thou, Theoria! How beautiful is thy face! How sweet thy breath! What gentle fragrance comes from thy bosom, gentle as freedom from military duty, as the most dainty perfumes!

HERMES. Is it then a smell like a soldier's knapsack?

CHORUS. Oh! hateful soldier! your hideous satchel makes me sick! it stinks like the belching of onions, whereas this lovable deity has the odour of sweet fruits, of festivals, of the Dionysia, of the harmony of flutes, of the comic poets,

of the verses of Sophocles, of the phrases of Euripides…

TRYGAEUS. That's a foul calumny, you wretch! She detests that framer of subtleties and quibbles.

CHORUS. … of ivy, of straining-bags for wine, of bleating ewes, of provision-laden women hastening to the kitchen, of the tipsy servant wench, of the upturned wine-jar, and of a whole heap of other good things.

HERMES. Then look how the reconciled towns chat pleasantly together, how they laugh; and yet they are all cruelly mishandled; their wounds are bleeding still.

TRYGAEUS. But let us also scan the mien of the spectators; we shall thus find out the trade of each.

HERMES. Ah! good gods! look at that poor crest-maker, tearing at his hair, and at that pike-maker, who has just broken wind in yon sword-cutler's face.

TRYGAEUS. And do you see with what pleasure this sickle-maker is making long noses at the spear-maker?

HERMES. Now ask the husbandmen to be off.

TRYGAEUS. Listen, good folk! Let the husbandmen take their farming tools and return to their fields as quick as possible, but without either sword, spear or javelin. All is as quiet as if Peace had been reigning for a century. Come, let everyone go till the earth, singing the Paean.

CHORUS. Oh, thou, whom men of standing desired and who art good to husbandmen, I have gazed upon thee with delight; and now I go to greet my vines, to caress after so long an absence the fig trees I planted in my youth.

TRYGAEUS. Friends, let us first adore the goddess, who has delivered us from crests and Gorgons; then let us hurry to our farms, having first bought a nice little piece of salt fish to eat in the fields.

HERMES. By Posidon! what a fine crew they make and dense as the crust of a cake; they are as nimble as guests on their way to a feast.

TRYGAEUS. See, how their iron spades glitter and how beautifully their three-pronged mattocks glisten in the sun! How regularly they will align the plants! I also burn myself to go into the country and to turn over the earth I have so long neglected. — Friends, do you remember the happy life that peace afforded us formerly; can you recall the splendid baskets of figs, both fresh and dried, the myrtles, the sweet wine, the violets blooming near the spring, and the olives, for which we have wept so much? Worship, adore the goddess for restoring you so many blessings.

CHORUS. Hail! hail! thou beloved divinity! thy return overwhelms us with joy. When far from thee, my ardent wish to see my fields again made me pine with regret. From thee came all blessings. Oh! much desired Peace! thou art the sole support of those who spend their lives tilling the earth. Under thy rule we had a thousand delicious enjoyments at our beck; thou wert the husbandman's wheaten cake and his safeguard. So that our vineyards, our young fig-tree woods and all our plantations hail thee with delight and smile at thy coming. But where was she then, I wonder, all the long time she spent away from us? Hermes, thou benevolent god, tell us!

HERMES. Wise husbandmen, hearken to my words, if you want to know why she was lost to you. The start of our misfortunes was the exile of Phidias; Pericles feared he might share his ill-luck, he mistrusted your peevish nature and, to prevent all danger to himself, he threw out that little spark, the Megarian decree, set the city aflame, and blew up the conflagration with a hurricane of war, so that the smoke drew tears from all Greeks both here and over there. At the very outset of this fire our vines were a-crackle, our casks knocked together; it was beyond the power of any man to stop the disaster, and Peace disappeared.

TRYGAEUS. That, by Apollo! is what no one ever told me; I could not think what connection there could be between Phidias and Peace.

CHORUS. Nor I; I know it now. This accounts for her beauty, if she is related to him. There are so many things that escape us.

HERMES. Then, when the towns subject to you saw that you were angered one against the other and were showing each other your teeth like dogs, they hatched a thousand plots to pay you no more dues and gained over the chief citizens of Sparta at the price of gold. They, being as shamelessly greedy as they were faithless in diplomacy, chased off Peace with ignominy to let loose War. Though

this was profitable to them, 'twas the ruin of the husbandmen, who were innocent of all blame; for, in revenge, your galleys went out to devour their figs.

TRYGAEUS. And 'twas with justice too; did they not break down my black fig tree, which I had planted and dunged with my own hands?

CHORUS. Yes, by Zeus! yes, 'twas well done; the wretches broke a chest for me with stones, which held six medimni of corn.

HERMES. Then the rural labourers flocked into the city and let themselves be bought over like the others. Not having even a grape-stone to munch and longing after their figs, they looked towards the orators. These well knew that the poor were driven to extremity and lacked even bread; but they nevertheless drove away the Goddess each time she reappeared in answer to the wish of the country with their loud shrieks, that were as sharp as pitchforks; furthermore, they attacked the well-filled purses of the richest among our allies on the pretence that they belonged to Brasidas' party. And then you would tear the poor accused wretch to pieces with your teeth; for the city, all pale with hunger and cowed with terror, gladly snapped up any calumny that was thrown it to devour. So the strangers, seeing what terrible blows the informers dealt, sealed their lips with gold. They grew rich, while you, alas! you could only see that Greece was going to ruin. 'Twas the tanner who was the author of all this woe.

TRYGAEUS. Enough said, Hermes, leave that man in Hades, whither he has gone; he no longer belongs to us, but rather to yourself. That he was a cheat, a braggart, a calumniator when alive, why, nothing could be truer; but anything you might say now would be an insult to one of your own folk. Oh! venerated Goddess! why art thou silent?

HERMES. And how could she speak to the spectators? She is too angry at all that they have made her suffer.

TRYGAEUS. At least let her speak a little to you, Hermes.

HERMES. Tell me, my dear, what are your feelings with regard to them? Come, you relentless foe of all bucklers, speak; I am listening to you. *(Peace whispers into Hermes' ear.)* Is that your grievance against them? Yes, yes, I understand. Hearken, you folk, this is her complaint. She says, that after the affair of Pylos she came to you unbidden to bring you a basket full of truces and that you thrice

repulsed her by your votes in the assembly.

TRYGAEUS. Yes, we did wrong, but forgive us, for our mind was then entirely absorbed in leather.

HERMES. Listen again to what she has just asked me. Who was her greatest foe here? and furthermore, had she a friend who exerted himself to put an end to the fighting?

TRYGAEUS. Her most devoted friend was Cleonymus; it is undisputed.

HERMES. How then did Cleonymus behave in fights?

TRYGAEUS. Oh! the bravest of warriors! Only he was not born of the father he claims; he showed it quick enough in the army by throwing away his weapons.

HERMES. There is yet another question she has just put to me. Who rules now in the rostrum?

TRYGAEUS. 'Tis Hyperbolus, who now holds empire on the Pnyx. *(To Peace.)* What now? you turn away your head!

HERMES. She is vexed, that the people should give themselves a wretch of that kind for their chief.

TRYGAEUS Oh! we shall not employ him again; but the people, seeing themselves without a leader, took him haphazard, just as a man, who is naked, springs upon the first cloak he sees.

HERMES. She asks, what will be the result of such a choice of the city?

TRYGAEUS. We shall be more far-seeing in consequence.

HERMES. And why?

TRYGAEUS. Because he is a lamp-maker. Formerly we only directed our business by groping in the dark; now we shall only deliberate by lamplight.

HERMES. Oh! oh! what questions she does order me to put to you!

TRYGAEUS. What are they?

HERMES. She wants to have news of a whole heap of old-fashioned things she left here. First of all, how is Sophocles?

TRYGAEUS. Very well; but something very strange has happened to him.

HERMES. What then?

TRYGAEUS. He has turned from Sophocles into Simonides.

HERMES. Into Simonides? How so?

TRYGAEUS. Because, though old and broken-down as he is, he would put to sea on a hurdle to gain an obolus.

HERMES. And wise Cratinus, is he still alive?

TRYGAEUS. He died about the time of the Laconian invasion.

HERMES. How?

TRYGAEUS. Of a swoon. He could not bear the shock of seeing one of his casks full of wine broken. Ah! what a number of other misfortunes our city has suffered! So, dearest mistress, nothing can now separate us from thee.

HERMES. If that be so, receive Opora here for a wife; take her to the country, live with her, and grow fine grapes together.

TRYGAEUS. Come, my dear friend, come and accept my kisses. Tell me, Hermes, my master, do you think it would hurt me to fuck her a little, after so long an abstinence?

HERMES. No, not if you swallow a potion of penny-royal afterwards. But hasten to lead Theoria to the Senate; ’twas there she lodged before.

TRYGAEUS. Oh! fortunate Senate! Thanks to Theoria, what soups you will swallow for the space of three days! how you will devour meats and cooked tripe! Come, farewell, friend Hermes!

HERMES. And to you also, my dear sir, may you have much happiness, and don’t forget me.

TRYGAEUS. Come, beetle, home, home, and let us fly on a swift wing.

HERMES. Oh! he is no longer here.

TRYGAEUS. Where has he gone to then?

HERMES. He is harnessed to the chariot of Zeus and bears the thunderbolts.

TRYGAEUS. But where will the poor wretch get his food?

HERMES. He will eat Ganymede's ambrosia.

TRYGAEUS. Very well then, but how am I going to descend?

HERMES. Oh! never fear, there is nothing simpler; place yourself beside the goddess.

TRYGAEUS. Come, my pretty maidens, follow me quickly; there are plenty of folk awaiting you with standing tools.

CHORUS. Farewell and good luck be yours! Let us begin by handing over all this gear to the care of our servants, for no place is less safe than a theatre; there is always a crowd of thieves prowling around it, seeking to find some mischief to do. Come, keep a good watch over all this. As for ourselves, let us explain to the spectators what we have in our minds, the purpose of our play.

Undoubtedly the comic poet who mounted the stage to praise himself in the parabasis would deserve to be handed over to the sticks of the beadles. Nevertheless, oh Muse, if it be right to esteem the most honest and illustrious of our comic writers at his proper value, permit our poet to say that he thinks he has deserved a glorious renown. First of all, 'tis he who has compelled his rivals no longer to scoff at rags or to war with lice; and as for those Heracles, always chewing and ever hungry, those poltroons and cheats who allow themselves to be beaten at will, he was the first to cover them with ridicule and to chase them from the stage; he has also dismissed that slave, whom one never failed to set a-weeping before you, so that his comrade might have the chance of jeering at his stripes and might ask, "Wretch, what has happened to your hide? Has the lash rained an army of its thongs on you and laid your back waste?" After having delivered us from all these wearisome ineptitudes and these low buffooneries, he has built up for us a great art, like a palace with high towers, constructed of fine

phrases, great thoughts and of jokes not common on the streets. Moreover 'tis not obscure private persons or women that he stages in his comedies; but, bold as Heracles, 'tis the very greatest whom he attacks, undeterred by the fetid stink of leather or the threats of hearts of mud. He has the right to say, "I am the first ever dared to go straight for that beast with the sharp teeth and the terrible eyes that flashed lambent fire like those of Cynna, surrounded by a hundred lewd flatterers, who spittle-licked him to his heart's content; it had a voice like a roaring torrent, the stench of a seal, a foul Lamia's testicles and the rump of a camel."

I did not recoil in horror at the sight of such a monster, but fought him relentlessly to win your deliverance and that of the Islanders. Such are the services which should be graven in your recollection and entitle me to your thanks. Yet I have not been seen frequenting the wrestling school intoxicated with success and trying to tamper with young boys; but I took all my theatrical gear and returned straight home. I pained folk but little and caused them much amusement; my conscience rebuked me for nothing. Hence both grown men and youths should be on my side and I likewise invite the bald to give me their votes; for, if I triumph, everyone will say, both at table and at festivals, "Carry this to the bald man, give these cakes to the bald one, do not grudge the poet whose talent shines as bright as his own bare skull the share he deserves."

Oh, Muse! drive the War far from our city and come to preside over our dances, if you love me; come and celebrate the nuptials of the gods, the banquets of us mortals and the festivals of the fortunate; these are the themes that inspire thy most poetic songs. And should Carcinus come to beg thee for admission with his sons to thy chorus, refuse all traffic with them; remember they are but gelded birds, stork-necked dancers, mannikins about as tall as a pat of goat's dung, in fact machine-made poets. Contrary to all expectation, the father has at last managed to finish a piece, but he owns himself a cat strangled it one fine evening.

Such are the songs with which the Muse with the glorious hair inspires the able poet and which enchant the assembled populace, when the spring swallow twitters beneath the foliage; but the god spare us from the chorus of Morsimus and that of Melanthius! Oh! what a bitter discordancy grated upon my ears that day when the tragic chorus was directed by this same Melanthius and his brother, these two Gorgons, these two harpies, the plague of the seas, whose gluttonous bellies devour the entire race of fishes, these followers of old women,

these goats with their stinking arm-pits. Oh! Muse, spit upon them abundantly and keep the feast gaily with me.

TRYGAEUS. Ah! 'tis a rough job getting to the gods! my legs are as good as broken through it. How small you were, to be sure, when seen from heaven! you had all the appearance too of being great rascals; but seen close, you look even worse.

SERVANT. Is that you, master?

TRYGAEUS. So I have been told.

SERVANT. What has happened to you?

TRYGAEUS. My legs pain me; it is such a plaguey long journey.

SERVANT. Oh! do tell me….

TRYGAEUS. What?

SERVANT. Did you see any other man besides yourself strolling about in heaven?

TRYGAEUS. No, only the souls of two or three dithyrambic poets.

SERVANT. What were they doing up there?

TRYGAEUS. They were seeking to catch some lyric exordia as they flew by immersed in the billows of the air.

SERVANT. Is it true, what they tell us, that men are turned into stars after death?

TRYGAEUS. Quite true.

SERVANT. Then who is that star I see over yonder?

TRYGAEUS. That is Ion of Chios, the author of an ode beginning "Morning"; as soon as ever he got to heaven, they called him "the Morning Star."

SERVANT. And those stars like sparks, that plough up the air as they dart across the sky?

TRYGAEUS. They are the rich leaving the feast with a lantern and a light inside it. But hurry up, show this young girl into my house, clean out the bath, heat some water and prepare the nuptial couch for herself and me. When ’tis done, come back here; meanwhile I am off to present this one to the Senate.

SERVANT. But where then did you get these pretty chattels?

TRYGAEUS. Where? why in heaven.

SERVANT. I would not give more than an obolus for gods who have got to keeping brothels like us mere mortals.

TRYGAEUS. They are not all so, but there are some up there too who live by this trade.

SERVANT. Come, that’s rich! But I bethink me, shall I give her something to eat?

TRYGAEUS. No, for she would neither touch bread nor cake; she is used to licking ambrosia at the table of the gods.

SERVANT. Well, we can give her something to lick down here too.

CHORUS. Here is a truly happy old man, as far as I can judge.

TRYGAEUS. Ah! but what shall I be, when you see me presently dressed for the wedding?

CHORUS. Made young again by love and scented with perfumes, your lot will be one we all shall envy.

TRYGAEUS. And when I lie beside her and caress her bosoms?

CHORUS. Oh! then you will be happier than those spinning-tops who call Carcinus their father.

TRYGAEUS. And I well deserve it; have I not bestridden a beetle to save the

Greeks, who now, thanks to me, can make love at their ease and sleep peacefully on their farms?

SERVANT. The girl has quitted the bath; she is charming from head to foot, both belly and buttocks; the cake is baked and they are kneading the sesame-biscuit; nothing is lacking but the bridegroom's penis.

TRYGAEUS. Let us first hasten to lodge Theoria in the hands of the Senate.

SERVANT. But tell me, who is this woman?

TRYGAEUS. Why, 'tis Theoria, with whom we used formerly to go to Brauron, to get tipsy and frolic. I had the greatest trouble to get hold of her.

SERVANT. Ah! you charmer! what pleasure your pretty bottom will afford me every four years!

TRYGAEUS. Let us see, who of you is steady enough to be trusted by the Senate with the care of this charming wench? Hi! you, friend! what are you drawing there?

SERVANT. I am drawing the plan of the tent I wish to erect for myself on the isthmus.

TRYGAEUS. Come, who wishes to take the charge of her? No one? Come, Theoria, I am going to lead you into the midst of the spectators and confide you to their care.

SERVANT. Ah! there is one who makes a sign to you.

TRYGAEUS. Who is it?

SERVANT. 'Tis Ariphrades. He wishes to take her home at once.

TRYGAEUS. No, I'm sure he shan't. He would soon have her done for, licking up all her life juice. Come, Theoria, put down all this gear. — Senate, Prytanes, look upon Theoria and see what precious blessings I place in your hands. Hasten to raise its limbs and to immolate the victim. Admire the fine chimney, it is quite black with smoke, for 'twas here that the Senate did their cooking before the

War. Now that you have found Theoria again, you can start the most charming games from to-morrow, wrestling with her on the ground, either on your hands and feet, or you can lay her on her side, or stand before her with bent knees, or, well rubbed with oil, you can boldly enter the lists, as in the Pancratium, belabouring your foe with blows from your fist or otherwise. The next day you will celebrate equestrian games, in which the riders will ride side by side, or else the chariot teams, thrown one on top of another, panting and whinnying, will roll and knock against each other on the ground, while other rivals, thrown out of their seats, will fall before reaching the goal, utterly exhausted by their efforts. — Come, Prytanes, take Theoria. Oh! look how graciously yonder fellow has received her; you would not have been in such a hurry to introduce her to the Senate, if nothing were coming to you through it; you would not have failed to plead some holiday as an excuse.

CHORUS. Such a man as you assures the happiness of all his fellow-citizens.

TRYGAEUS. When you are gathering your vintages you will prize me even better.

CHORUS. E'en from to-day we hail you as the deliverer of mankind.

TRYGAEUS. Wait until you have drunk a beaker of new wine, before you appraise my true merits.

CHORUS. Excepting the gods, there is none greater than yourself, and that will ever be our opinion.

TRYGAEUS. Yea, Trygaeus of Athmonia has deserved well of you, he has freed both husbandman and craftsman from the most cruel ills; he has vanquished Hyperbolus.

CHORUS. Well then, what must we do now?

TRYGAEUS. You must offer pots of green-stuff to the goddess to consecrate her altars.

CHORUS. Pots of green-stuff as we do to poor Hermes — and even he thinks the fare but mean?

TRYGAEUS. What will you offer then? A fatted bull?

CHORUS. Oh, no! I don’t want to start bellowing the battle-cry.

TRYGAEUS. A great fat swine then?

CHORUS. No, no.

TRYGAEUS. Why not?

CHORUS. We don’t want any of the swinishness of Theagenes.

TRYGAEUS. What other victim do you prefer then?

CHORUS. A sheep.

TRYGAEUS. A sheep?

CHORUS. Yes.

TRYGAEUS. But you must give the word the Ionic form.

CHORUS. Purposely. So that if anyone in the assembly says, “We must go to war,” all may start bleating in alarm, “Oï, oï.”

TRYGAEUS. A brilliant idea.

CHORUS. And we shall all be lambs one toward the other, yea, and milder still toward the allies.

TRYGAEUS. Then go for the sheep and haste to bring it back with you; I will prepare the altar for the sacrifice.

CHORUS. How everything succeeds to our wish, when the gods are willing and Fortune favours us! how opportunely everything falls out.

TRYGAEUS. Nothing could be truer, for look! here stands the altar all ready at my door.

CHORUS. Hurry, hurry, for the winds are fickle; make haste, while the divine will is set on stopping this cruel war and is showering on us the most striking benefits.

TRYGAEUS. Here is the basket of barley-seed mingled with salt, the chaplet and the sacred knife; and there is the fire; so we are only waiting for the sheep.

CHORUS. Hasten, hasten, for, if Chaeris sees you, he will come without bidding, he and his flute; and when you see him puffing and panting and out of breath, you will have to give him something.

TRYGAEUS. Come, seize the basket and take the lustral water and hurry to circle round the altar to the right.

SERVANT. There! 'tis done. What is your next bidding?

TRYGAEUS. Hold! I take this fire-brand first and plunge it into the water.

SERVANT. Be quick! be quick! Sprinkle the altar.

TRYGAEUS. Give me some barley-seed, purify yourself and hand me the basin; then scatter the rest of the barley among the audience.

SERVANT. 'Tis done.

TRYGAEUS. You have thrown it?

SERVANT. Yes, by Hermes! and all the spectators have had their share.

TRYGAEUS. But not the women?

SERVANT. Oh! their husbands will give it them this evening.

TRYGAEUS. Let us pray! Who is here? Are there any good men?

SERVANT. Come, give, so that I may sprinkle these. Faith! they are indeed good, brave men.

TRYGAEUS. You believe so?

SERVANT. I am sure, and the proof of it is that we have flooded them with lustral water and they have not budged an inch.

TRYGAEUS. Come then, to prayers; to prayers, quick! — Oh! Peace, mighty queen, venerated goddess, thou, who presidest over choruses and at nuptials,

deign to accept the sacrifices we offer thee.

SERVANT. Receive it, greatly honoured mistress, and behave not like the coquettes, who half open the door to entice the gallants, draw back when they are stared at, to return once more if a man passes on. But do not act like this to us.

TRYGAEUS. No, but like an honest woman, show thyself to thy worshippers, who are worn with regretting thee all these thirteen years. Hush the noise of battle, be a true Lysimacha to us. Put an end to this tittle-tattle, to this idle babble, that set us defying one another. Cause the Greeks once more to taste the pleasant beverage of friendship and temper all hearts with the gentle feeling of forgiveness. Make excellent commodities flow to our markets, fine heads of garlic, early cucumbers, apples, pomegranates and nice little cloaks for the slaves; make them bring geese, ducks, pigeons and larks from Boeotia and baskets of eels from Lake Copaïs; we shall all rush to buy them, disputing their possession with Morychus, Teleas, Glaucetes and every other glutton. Melanthius will arrive on the market last of all; 'twill be, "no more eels, all sold!" and then he'll start a-groaning and exclaiming as in his monologue of Medea, "I am dying, I am dying! Alas! I have let those hidden in the beet escape me!" And won't we laugh? These are the wishes, mighty goddess, which we pray thee to grant.

SERVANT. Take the knife and slaughter the sheep like a finished cook.

TRYGAEUS. No, the goddess does not wish it.

SERVANT. And why not?

TRYGAEUS. Blood cannot please Peace, so let us spill none upon her altar. Therefore go and sacrifice the sheep in the house, cut off the legs and bring them here; thus the carcase will be saved for the choragus.

CHORUS. You, who remain here, get chopped wood and everything needed for the sacrifice ready.

TRYGAEUS. Don't I look like a diviner preparing his mystic fire?

CHORUS. Undoubtedly. Will anything that it behoves a wise man to know escape you? Don't you know all that a man should know, who is distinguished

for his wisdom and inventive daring?

TRYGAEUS. There! the wood catches. Its smoke blinds poor Stilbides.
I am now going to bring the table and thus be my own slave.

CHORUS. You have braved a thousand dangers to save your sacred town. All honour to you! your glory will be ever envied.

SERVANT. Hold! here are the legs, place them upon the altar. For myself,
I mean to go back to the entrails and the cakes.

TRYGAEUS. I'll see to those; I want you here.

SERVANT. Well then, here I am. Do you think I have been long?

TRYGAEUS. Just get this roasted. Ah! who is this man, crowned with laurel, who is coming to me?

SERVANT. He has a self-important look; is he some diviner?

TRYGAEUS. No, i' faith! 'tis Hierocles.

SERVANT. Ah! that oracle-monger from Oreus. What is he going to tell us?

TRYGAEUS. Evidently he is coming to oppose the peace.

SERVANT. No, 'tis the odour of the fat that attracts him.

TRYGAEUS. Let us appear not to see him.

SERVANT. Very well.

HIEROCLES. What sacrifice is this? to what god are you offering it?

TRYGAEUS *(to the servant)*. Silence! — *(Aloud.)* Look after the roasting and keep your hands off the meat.

HIEROCLES. To whom are you sacrificing? Answer me. Ah! the tail is showing favourable omens.

SERVANT. Aye, very favourable, oh, loved and mighty Peace!

HIEROCLES. Come, cut off the first offering and make the oblation.

TRYGAEUS. ’Tis not roasted enough.

HIEROCLES. Yea, truly, ’tis done to a turn.

TRYGAEUS. Mind your own business, friend! *(To the servant.)* Cut away. Where is the table? Bring the libations.

HIEROCLES. The tongue is cut separately.

TRYGAEUS. We know all that. But just listen to one piece of advice.

HIEROCLES. And that is?

TRYGAEUS. Don’t talk, for ’tis divine Peace to whom we are sacrificing.

HIEROCLES. Oh! wretched mortals, oh, you idiots!

TRYGAEUS. Keep such ugly terms for yourself.

HIEROCLES. What! you are so ignorant you don’t understand the will of the gods and you make a treaty, you, who are men, with apes, who are full of malice!

TRYGAEUS. Ha, ha, ha!

HIEROCLES. What are you laughing at?

TRYGAEUS. Ha, ha! your apes amuse me!

HIEROCLES. You simple pigeons, you trust yourselves to foxes, who are all craft, both in mind and heart.

TRYGAEUS. Oh, you trouble-maker! may your lungs get as hot as this meat!

HIEROCLES. Nay, nay! if only the Nymphs had not fooled Bacis, and Bacis mortal men; and if the Nymphs had not tricked Bacis a second time….

TRYGAEUS. May the plague seize you, if you won’t stop wearying us with your Bacis!

HIEROCLES. … it would not have been written in the book of Fate that the bonds of Peace must be broken; but first….

TRYGAEUS. The meat must be dusted with salt.

HIEROCLES. … it does not please the blessed gods that we should stop the War until the wolf uniteth with the sheep.

TRYGAEUS. How, you cursed animal, could the wolf ever unite with the sheep?

HIEROCLES. As long as the wood-bug gives off a fetid odour, when it flies; as long as the noisy bitch is forced by nature to litter blind pups, so long shall peace be forbidden.

TRYGAEUS. Then what should be done? Not to stop the War would be to leave it to the decision of chance which of the two people should suffer the most, whereas by uniting under a treaty, we share the empire of Greece.

HIEROCLES. You will never make the crab walk straight.

TRYGAEUS. You shall no longer be fed at the Prytaneum; the war done, oracles are not wanted.

HIEROCLES. You will never smooth the rough spikes of the hedgehog.

TRYGAEUS. Will you never stop fooling the Athenians?

HIEROCLES. What oracle ordered you to burn these joints of mutton in honour of the gods?

TRYGAEUS. This grand oracle of Homer's: "Thus vanished the dark war-clouds and we offered a sacrifice to new-born Peace. When the flame had consumed the thighs of the victim and its inwards had appeased our hunger, we poured out the libations of wine." 'Twas I who arranged the sacred rites, but none offered the shining cup to the diviner.

HIEROCLES. I care little for that. 'Tis not the Sibyl who spoke it.

TRYGAEUS. Wise Homer has also said: "He who delights in the horrors of

civil war has neither country nor laws nor home." What noble words!

HIEROCLES. Beware lest the kite turn your brain and rob….

TRYGAEUS. Look out, slave! This oracle threatens our meat. Quick, pour the libation, and give me some of the inwards.

HIEROCLES. I too will help myself to a bit, if you like.

TRYGAEUS. The libation! the libation!

HIEROCLES. Pour out also for me and give me some of this meat.

TRYGAEUS. No, the blessed gods won't allow it yet; let us drink; and as for you, get you gone, for 'tis their will. Mighty Peace! stay ever in our midst.

HIEROCLES. Bring the tongue hither.

TRYGAEUS. Relieve us of your own.

HIEROCLES. The libation.

TRYGAEUS. Here! and this into the bargain *(strikes him)*.

HIEROCLES. You will not give me any meat?

TRYGAEUS. We cannot give you any until the wolf unites with the sheep.

HIEROCLES. I will embrace your knees.

TRYGAEUS. 'Tis lost labour, good fellow; you will never smooth the rough spikes of the hedgehog…. Come, spectators, join us in our feast.

HIEROCLES. And what am I to do?

TRYGAEUS. You? go and eat the Sibyl.

HIEROCLES. No, by the Earth! no, you shall not eat without me; if you do not give, I take; 'tis common property.

TRYGAEUS *(to the servant)*. Strike, strike this Bacis, this humbugging

soothsayer.

HIEROCLES. I take to witness….

TRYGAEUS. And I also, that you are a glutton and an impostor. Hold him tight and beat the impostor with a stick.

SERVANT. You look to that; I will snatch the skin from him, which he has stolen from us. Are you going to let go that skin, you priest from hell! do you hear! Oh! what a fine crow has come from Oreus! Stretch your wings quickly for Elymnium.

CHORUS. Oh! joy, joy! no more helmet, no more cheese nor onions! No, I have no passion for battles; what I love, is to drink with good comrades in the corner by the fire when good dry wood, cut in the height of the summer, is crackling; it is to cook pease on the coals and beechnuts among the embers; 'tis to kiss our pretty Thracian while my wife is at the bath. Nothing is more pleasing, when the rain is sprouting our sowings, than to chat with some friend, saying, "Tell me, Comarchides, what shall we do? I would willingly drink myself, while the heavens are watering our fields. Come, wife, cook three measures of beans, adding to them a little wheat, and give us some figs. Syra! call Manes off the fields, 'tis impossible to prune the vine or to align the ridges, for the ground is too wet to-day. Let someone bring me the thrush and those two chaffinches; there were also some curds and four pieces of hare, unless the cat stole them last evening, for I know not what the infernal noise was that I heard in the house. Serve up three of the pieces for me, slave, and give the fourth to my father. Go and ask Aeschinades for some myrtle branches with berries on them, and then, for 'tis the same road, you will invite Charinades to come and drink with me to the honour of the gods who watch over our crops."

When the grasshopper sings its dulcet tune, I love to see the Lemnian vines beginning to ripen, for 'tis the earliest plant of all. I love likewise to watch the fig filling out, and when it has reached maturity I eat with appreciation and exclaim, "Oh! delightful season!" Then too I bruise some thyme and infuse it in water. Indeed I grow a great deal fatter passing the summer this way than in watching a cursed captain with his three plumes and his military cloak of a startling crimson *(he calls it true Sardian purple)*, which he takes care to dye himself with Cyzicus saffron in a battle; then he is the first to run away, shaking his plumes like a great yellow prancing cock, while I am left to watch the nets.

Once back again in Athens, these brave fellows behave abominably; they write down these, they scratch through others, and this backwards and forwards two or three times at random. The departure is set for to-morrow, and some citizen has brought no provisions, because he didn't know he had to go; he stops in front of the statue of Pandion, reads his name, is dumbfounded and starts away at a run, weeping bitter tears. The townsfolk are less illused, but that is how the husbandmen are treated by these men of war, the hated of the gods and of men, who know nothing but how to throw away their shield. For this reason, if it please heaven, I propose to call these rascals to account, for they are lions in times of peace, but sneaking foxes when it comes to fighting.

TRYGAEUS. Oh! oh! what a crowd for the nuptial feast! Here! dust the tables with this crest, which is good for nothing else now. Halloa! produce the cakes, the thrushes, plenty of good jugged hare and the little loaves.

A SICKLE-MAKER. Trygaeus, where is Trygaeus?

TRYGAEUS. I am cooking the thrushes.

SICKLE-MAKER. Trygaeus, my best of friends, what a fine stroke of business you have done for me by bringing back Peace! Formerly my sickles would not have sold at an obolus apiece, to-day I am being paid fifty drachmas for every one. And here is a neighbour who is selling his casks for the country at three drachmae each. So come, Trygaeus, take as many sickles and casks as you will for nothing. Accept them for nothing; 'tis because of our handsome profits on our sales that we offer you these wedding presents.

TRYGAEUS. Thanks. Put them all down inside there, and come along quick to the banquet. Ah! do you see that armourer yonder coming with a wry face?

A CREST-MAKER. Alas! alas! Trygaeus, you have ruined me utterly.

TRYGAEUS. What! won't the crests go any more, friend?

CREST-MAKER. You have killed my business, my livelihood, and that of this poor lance-maker too.

TRYGAEUS. Come, come, what are you asking for these two crests?

CREST-MAKER. What do you bid for them?

TRYGAEUS. What do I bid? Oh! I am ashamed to say. Still, as the clasp is of good workmanship, I would give two, even three measures of dried figs; I could use ‘em for dusting the table.

CREST-MAKER. All right, tell them to bring me the dried figs; ’tis always better than nothing.

TRYGAEUS. Take them away, be off with your crests and get you gone; they are moulting, they are losing all their hair; I would not give a single fig for them.

A BREASTPLATE-MAKER. Good gods, what am I going to do with this fine ten-minae breast-plate, which is so splendidly made?

TRYGAEUS. Oh, you will lose nothing over it.

BREASTPLATE-MAKER. I will sell it you at cost price.

TRYGAEUS. ’Twould be very useful as a night-stool….

BREASTPLATE-MAKER. Cease your insults, both to me and my wares.

TRYGAEUS. … if propped on three stones. Look, ’tis admirable.

BREASTPLATE-MAKER. But how can you wipe, idiot?

TRYGAEUS. I can pass one hand through here, and the other there, and so….

BREASTPLATE-MAKER. What! do you wipe with both hands?

TRYGAEUS. Aye, so that I may not be accused of robbing the State, by blocking up an oar-hole in the galley.

BREASTPLATE-MAKER. So you would pay ten minae for a night-stool?

TRYGAEUS. Undoubtedly, you rascal. Do you think I would sell my rump for a thousand drachmae?

BREASTPLATE-MAKER. Come, have the money paid over to me.

TRYGAEUS. No, friend; I find it hurts me to sit on. Take it away, I won’t buy.

A TRUMPET-MAKER. What is to be done with this trumpet, for which I gave sixty drachmae the other day?

TRYGAEUS. Pour lead into the hollow and fit a good, long stick to the top; and you will have a balanced cottabos.

TRUMPET-MAKER. Ha! would you mock me?

TRYGAEUS. Well, here's another notion. Pour in lead as I said, add here a dish hung on strings, and you will have a balance for weighing the figs which you give your slaves in the fields.

A HELMET-MAKER. Cursed fate! I am ruined. Here are helmets, for which I gave a mina each. What am I to do with them? who will buy them?

TRYGAEUS. Go and sell them to the Egyptians; they will do for measuring loosening medicines.

A SPEAR-MAKER. Ah! poor helmet-maker, things are indeed in a bad way.

TRYGAEUS. That man has no cause for complaint.

SPEAR-MAKER. But helmets will be no more used.

TRYGAEUS. Let him learn to fit a handle to them and he can sell them for more money.

SPEAR-MAKER. Let us be off, comrade.

TRYGAEUS. No, I want to buy these spears.

SPEAR-MAKER. What will you give?

TRYGAEUS. If they could be split in two, I would take them at a drachma per hundred to use as vine-props.

SPEAR-MAKER. The insolent dog! Let us go, friend.

TRYGAEUS. Ah! here come the guests, children from the table to relieve themselves; I fancy they also want to hum over what they will be singing presently. Hi! child! what do you reckon to sing? Stand there and give me the

opening line.

THE SON OF LAMACHUS. “Glory to the young warriors….”

TRYGAEUS. Oh! leave off about your young warriors, you little wretch; we are at peace and you are an idiot and a rascal.

SON OF LAMACHUS. “The skirmish begins, the hollow bucklers clash against each other.”

TRYGAEUS. Bucklers! Leave me in peace with your bucklers.

SON OF LAMACHUS. “And then there came groanings and shouts of victory.”

TRYGAEUS. Groanings! ah! by Bacchus! look out for yourself, you cursed squaller, if you start wearying us again with your groanings and hollow bucklers.

SON OF LAMACHUS. Then what should I sing? Tell me what pleases you.

TRYGAEUS. “’Tis thus they feasted on the flesh of oxen,” or something similar, as, for instance, “Everything that could tickle the palate was placed on the table.”

SON OF LAMACHUS. “’Tis thus they feasted on the flesh of oxen and, tired of warfare, unharnessed their foaming steeds.”

TRYGAEUS. That’s splendid; tired of warfare, they seat themselves at table; sing, sing to us how they still go on eating after they are satiated.

SON OF LAMACHUS. “The meal over, they girded themselves …”

TRYGAEUS. With good wine, no doubt?

SON OF LAMACHUS. “… with armour and rushed forth from the towers, and a terrible shout arose.”

TRYGAEUS. Get you gone, you little scapegrace, you and your battles! You sing of nothing but warfare. Who is your father then?

SON OF LAMACHUS. My father?

TRYGAEUS. Why yes, your father.

SON OF LAMACHUS. I am Lamachus' son.

TRYGAEUS. Oh! oh! I could indeed have sworn, when I was listening to you, that you were the son of some warrior who dreams of nothing but wounds and bruises, of some Boulomachus or Clausimachus; go and sing your plaguey songs to the spearmen…. Where is the son of Cleonymus? Sing me something before going back to the feast. I am at least certain he will not sing of battles, for his father is far too careful a man.

SON OF CLEONYMUS. "An inhabitant of Saïs is parading with the spotless shield which I regret to say I have thrown into a thicket."

TRYGAEUS. Tell me, you little good-for-nothing, are you singing that for your father?

SON or CLEONYMUS. "But I saved my life."

TRYGAEUS. And dishonoured your family. But let us go in; I am very certain, that being the son of such a father, you will never forget this song of the buckler. You, who remain to the feast, 'tis your duty to devour dish after dish and not to ply empty jaws. Come, put heart into the work and eat with your mouths full. For, believe me, poor friends, white teeth are useless furniture, if they chew nothing.

CHORUS. Never fear; thanks all the same for your good advice.

TRYGAEUS. You, who yesterday were dying of hunger, come, stuff yourselves with this fine hare-stew; 'tis not every day that we find cakes lying neglected. Eat, eat, or I predict you will soon regret it.

CHORUS. Silence! Keep silence! Here is the bride about to appear! Take nuptial torches and let all rejoice and join in our songs. Then, when we have danced, clinked our cups and thrown Hyperbolus through the doorway, we will carry back all our farming tools to the fields and shall pray the gods to give wealth to the Greeks and to cause us all to gather in an abundant barley harvest, enjoy a noble vintage, to grant that we may choke with good figs, that our wives may prove fruitful, that in fact we may recover all our lost blessings, and that the sparkling fire may be restored to the hearth.

TRYGAEUS. Come, wife, to the fields and seek, my beauty, to brighten and enliven my nights. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

CHORUS. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus! oh! thrice happy man, who so well deserve your good fortune!

TRYGAEUS. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

CHORUS. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS. What shall we do to her?

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS. What shall we do to her?

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS. We will gather her kisses.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS. We will gather her kisses.

CHORUS. Come, comrades, we who are in the first row, let us pick up the bridegroom and carry him in triumph. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

TRYGAEUS. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

CHORUS. You shall have a fine house, no cares and the finest of figs. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

TRYGAEUS. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

CHORUS. The bridegroom’s fig is great and thick; the bride’s is very soft and tender.

TRYGAEUS. While eating and drinking deep draughts of wine, continue to repeat: Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

CHORUS. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

TRYGAEUS. Farewell, farewell, my friends. All who come with me shall have cakes galore.

THE BIRDS

Anonymous translation for the Athenian Society, London, 1912

This famous comedy was first performed in 414 BC at the City Dionysia, where it won second prize. Unlike Aristophanes' other early plays, *The Birds* includes no direct mention of the Peloponnesian War and there are few references to Athenian politics, though it was staged not long after the commencement of the Sicilian Expedition, an ambitious military campaign that had greatly increased Athenian commitment to the war effort. It is the longest of Aristophanes' surviving plays, providing a humorous fantasy, celebrated for its remarkable depiction of birds and imaginative songs.

The play begins with two middle-aged men stumbling across a hillside wilderness, guided by a pet crow and a pet jackdaw. One of them advises the audience that they are fed up with life in Athens, where people do nothing all day but argue over laws, and they are looking for Tereus, a king who was once metamorphosed into the Hoopoe, as they feel he might help them find a better life somewhere else. Just then a very large and fearsome bird emerges from a camouflaged bower, demanding to know what they are up to and accusing them of being bird-catchers. The bird is in fact the Hoopoe's servant and the men convince him to fetch his master.

Moments later Tereus himself appears, who is happy to discuss their plight and one of the men has a brilliant idea: the birds should stop flying about mindlessly and instead should build themselves a great city in the sky, since this would not only allow them to enslave men, it would also enable them to blockade the Olympian gods in the same way that the Athenians had recently starved the island of Melos into submission. The Hoopoe likes the idea and he agrees to help implement it, provided of course that the two Athenians can first convince all the other birds. He calls to his wife, the Nightingale, and bids her to begin her celestial music. The notes of an unseen flute swell through the theatre and meanwhile the Hoopoe provides the lyrics, summoning the birds of the world from their different habitats — birds of the fields, mountain birds and birds of the trees, birds of the waterways, marshes and seas. These soon begin to appear and each of them is identified by name on arrival. Four of them dance together while the rest form into a Chorus. In time, the birds are completely won over and urge the Athenians to lead them in their war against the usurping gods.

They then set about building their city-in-the-sky, which they decide to call Νεφελοκοκκυγία – Cloudcuckooland – the original source of this famous expression.

An Attic vase depicting a scene from this famous play

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A Willamette University Theatre production of The Birds in 1986

INTRODUCTION

The Birds' differs markedly from all the other Comedies of Aristophanes which have come down to us in subject and general conception. It is just an extravaganza pure and simple — a graceful, whimsical theme chosen expressly for the sake of the opportunities it afforded of bright, amusing dialogue, pleasing lyrical interludes, and charming displays of brilliant stage effects and pretty dresses. Unlike other plays of the same Author, there is here apparently no serious political *motif* underlying the surface burlesque and buffoonery.

Some critics, it is true, profess to find in it a reference to the unfortunate Sicilian Expedition, then in progress, and a prophecy of its failure and the political downfall of Alcibiades. But as a matter of fact, the whole thing seems rather an attempt on the dramatist's part to relieve the overwrought minds of his fellow-citizens, anxious and discouraged at the unsatisfactory reports from before Syracuse, by a work conceived in a lighter vein than usual and mainly unconnected with contemporary realities.

The play was produced in the year 414 B.C., just when success or failure in Sicily hung in the balance, though already the outlook was gloomy, and many circumstances pointed to impending disaster. Moreover, the public conscience was still shocked and perturbed over the mysterious affair of the mutilation of the Hermae, which had occurred immediately before the sailing of the fleet, and strongly suspicious of Alcibiades' participation in the outrage. In spite of the inherent charm of the subject, the splendid outbursts of lyrical poetry in some of the choruses and the beauty of the scenery and costumes, 'The Birds' failed to win the first prize. This was acclaimed to a play of Aristophanes' rival, Amipsias, the title of which, 'The Comastae,' *or* 'Revellers,' "seems to imply that the chief interest was derived from direct allusions to the outrage above mentioned and to the individuals suspected to have been engaged in it."

For this reason, which militated against its immediate success, *viz.* the absence of direct allusion to contemporary politics — there are, of course, incidental references here and there to topics and personages of the day — the play appeals perhaps more than any other of our Author's productions to the modern reader. Sparkling wit, whimsical fancy, poetic charm, are of all ages, and can be appreciated as readily by ourselves as by an Athenian audience of two thousand years ago, though, of course, much is inevitably lost "without the important adjuncts of music, scenery, dresses and what we may call 'spectacle' generally, which we know in this instance to have been on the most magnificent

scale."

"The plot is this. Euelpides and Pisthetaerus, two old Athenians, disgusted with the litigiousness, wrangling and sycophancy of their countrymen, resolve upon quitting Attica. Having heard of the fame of Epops *(the hoopoe)*, sometime called Tereus, and now King of the Birds, they determine, under the direction of a raven and a jackdaw, to seek from him and his subject birds a city free from all care and strife." Arrived at the Palace of Epops, they knock, and Trochilus *(the wren)*, in a state of great flutter, as he mistakes them for fowlers, opens the door and informs them that his Majesty is asleep. When he awakes, the strangers appear before him, and after listening to a long and eloquent harangue on the superior attractions of a residence among the birds, they propose a notable scheme of their own to further enhance its advantages and definitely secure the sovereignty of the universe now exercised by the gods of Olympus.

The birds are summoned to meet in general council. They come flying up from all quarters of the heavens, and after a brief misunderstanding, during which they come near tearing the two human envoys to pieces, they listen to the exposition of the latters' plan. This is nothing less than the building of a new city, to be called Nephelococcygia, or 'Cloud-cuckoo-town,' between earth and heaven, to be garrisoned and guarded by the birds in such a way as to intercept all communication of the gods with their worshippers on earth. All steam of sacrifice will be prevented from rising to Olympus, and the Immortals will very soon be starved into an acceptance of any terms proposed.

The new Utopia is duly constructed, and the daring plan to secure the sovereignty is in a fair way to succeed. Meantime various quacks and charlatans, each with a special scheme for improving things, arrive from earth, and are one after the other exposed and dismissed. Presently arrives Prometheus, who informs Epops of the desperate straits to which the gods are by this time reduced, and advises him to push his claims and demand the hand of Basileia *(Dominion)*, the handmaid of Zeus. Next an embassy from the Olympians appears on the scene, consisting of Heracles, Posidon and a god from the savage regions of the Triballians. After some disputation, it is agreed that all reasonable demands of the birds are to be granted, while Pisthetaerus is to have Basileia as his bride. The comedy winds up with the epithalamium in honour of the nuptials.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

EUELPIDES.
PISTHETAERUS.
EPOPS *(the Hoopoe)*.
TROCHILUS, Servant to Epops.
PHOENICOPTERUS.
HERALDS.
A PRIEST.
A POET.
A PROPHET.
METON, a Geometrician.
A COMMISSIONER.
A DEALER IN DECREES.
IRIS.
A PARRICIDE.
CINESIAS, a Dithyrambic Bard.
AN INFORMER.
PROMETHEUS.
POSIDON.
TRIBALLUS.
HERACLES.
SERVANT of PISTHETAERUS.
MESSENGERS.
CHORUS OF BIRDS.

SCENE: A wild, desolate tract of open country; broken rocks and brushwood occupy the centre of the stage.

THE BIRDS

EUELPIDES *(to his jay)*. Do you think I should walk straight for yon tree?

PISTHETAERUS *(to his crow)*. Cursed beast, what are you croaking to me?… to retrace my steps?

EUELPIDES. Why, you wretch, we are wandering at random, we are exerting ourselves only to return to the same spot; ’tis labour lost.

PISTHETAERUS. To think that I should trust to this crow, which has made me cover more than a thousand furlongs!

EUELPIDES. And I to this jay, who has torn every nail from my fingers!

PISTHETAERUS. If only I knew where we were. . . .

EUELPIDES. Could you find your country again from here?

PISTHETAERUS. No, I feel quite sure I could not, any more than could Execestides find his.

EUELPIDES. Oh dear! oh dear!

PISTHETAERUS. Aye, aye, my friend, ’tis indeed the road of “oh dears” we are following.

EUELPIDES. That Philocrates, the bird-seller, played us a scurvy trick, when he pretended these two guides could help us to find Tereus, the Epops, who is a bird, without being born of one. He has indeed sold us this jay, a true son of Tharelides, for an obolus, and this crow for three, but what can they do? Why, nothing whatever but bite and scratch! — What’s the matter with you then, that you keep opening your beak? Do you want us to fling ourselves headlong down these rocks? There is no road that way.

PISTHETAERUS. Not even the vestige of a track in any direction.

EUELPIDES. And what does the crow say about the road to follow?

PISTHETAERUS. By Zeus, it no longer croaks the same thing it did.

EUELPIDES. And which way does it tell us to go now?

PISTHETAERUS. It says that, by dint of gnawing, it will devour my fingers.

EUELPIDES. What misfortune is ours! we strain every nerve to get to the birds, do everything we can to that end, and we cannot find our way! Yes, spectators, our madness is quite different to that of Sacas. He is not a citizen, and would fain be one at any cost; we, on the contrary, born of an honourable tribe and family and living in the midst of our fellow-citizens, we have fled from our country as hard as ever we could go. 'Tis not that we hate it; we recognize it to be great and rich, likewise that everyone has the right to ruin himself; but the crickets only chirrup among the fig-trees for a month or two, whereas the Athenians spend their whole lives in chanting forth judgments from their law courts. That is why we started off with a basket, a stew-pot and some myrtle boughs and have come to seek a quiet country in which to settle. We are going to Tereus, the Epops, to learn from him, whether, in his aerial flights, he has noticed some town of this kind.

PISTHETAERUS. Here! look!

EUELPIDES. What's the matter?

PISTHETAERUS. Why, the crow has been pointing me to something up there for some time now.

EUELPIDES. And the jay is also opening its beak and craning its neck to show me I know not what. Clearly, there are some birds about here. We shall soon know, if we kick up a noise to start them.

PISTHETAERUS. Do you know what to do? Knock your leg against this rock.

EUELPIDES. And you your head to double the noise.

PISTHETAERUS. Well then use a stone instead; take one and hammer with it.

EUELPIDES. Good idea! Ho there, within! Slave! slave!

PISTHETAERUS. What's that, friend! You say, "slave," to summon Epops! 'Twould be much better to shout, "Epops, Epops!"

It would be much better to shout, "Epops, Epops!"

EUELPIDES. Well then, Epops! Must I knock again? Epops!

TROCHILUS. Who's there? Who calls my master?

EUELPIDES. Apollo the Deliverer! what an enormous beak!

TROCHILUS. Good god! they are bird-catchers.

EUELPIDES. The mere sight of him petrifies me with terror. What a horrible monster!

TROCHILUS. Woe to you!

EUELPIDES. But we are not men.

TROCHILUS. What are you, then?

EUELPIDES. I am the Fearling, an African bird.

TROCHILUS. You talk nonsense.

EUELPIDES. Well, then, just ask it of my feet.

TROCHILUS. And this other one, what bird is it?

PISTHETAERUS. I? I am a Cackling, from the land of the pheasants.

EUELPIDES. But you yourself, in the name of the gods! what animal are you?

TROCHILUS. Why, I am a slave-bird.

EUELPIDES. Why, have you been conquered by a cock?

TROCHILUS. No, but when my master was turned into a peewit, he begged me to become a bird too, to follow and to serve him.

EUELPIDES. Does a bird need a servant, then?

TROCHILUS. 'Tis no doubt because he was a man. At times he wants to eat a dish of loach from Phalerum; I seize my dish and fly to fetch him some. Again

he wants some pea-soup; I seize a ladle and a pot and run to get it.

EUELPIDES. This is, then, truly a running-bird. Come, Trochilus, do us the kindness to call your master.

TROCHILUS. Why, he has just fallen asleep after a feed of myrtle-berries and a few grubs.

EUELPIDES. Never mind; wake him up.

TROCHILUS. I am certain he will be angry. However, I will wake him to please you.

PISTHETAERUS. You cursed brute! why, I am almost dead with terror!

EUELPIDES. Oh! my god! 'twas sheer fear that made me lose my jay.

PISTHETAERUS. Ah! you great coward! were you so frightened that you let go your jay?

EUELPIDES. And did you not lose your crow, when you fell sprawling on the ground? Pray tell me that.

PISTHETAERUS. No, no.

EUELPIDES. Where is it, then?

PISTHETAERUS. It has flown away.

EUELPIDES. Then you did not let it go! Oh! you brave fellow!

EPOPS. Open the forest, that I may go out!

EUELPIDES. By Heracles! what a creature! what plumage! What means this triple crest?

EPOPS. Who wants me?

EUELPIDES. The twelve great gods have used you ill, meseems.

EPOPS. Are you chaffing me about my feathers? I have been a man, strangers.

EUELPIDES. ’Tis not you we are jeering at.

EPOPS. At what, then?

EUELPIDES. Why, ’tis your beak that looks so odd to us.

EPOPS. This is how Sophocles outrages me in his tragedies. Know, I once was Tereus.

EUELPIDES. You were Tereus, and what are you now? a bird or a peacock?

EPOPS. I am a bird.

EUELPIDES. Then where are your feathers? For I don’t see them.

EPOPS. They have fallen off.

EUELPIDES. Through illness.

EPOPS. No. All birds moult their feathers, you know, every winter, and others grow in their place. But tell me, who are you?

EUELPIDES. We? We are mortals.

EPOPS. From what country?

EUELPIDES. From the land of the beautiful galleys.

EPOPS. Are you dicasts?

EUELPIDES. No, if anything, we are anti-dicasts.

EPOPS. Is that kind of seed sown among you?

EUELPIDES. You have to look hard to find even a little in our fields.

EPOPS. What brings you here?

EUELPIDES. We wish to pay you a visit.

EPOPS. What for?

EUELPIDES. Because you formerly were a man, like we are, formerly you had debts, as we have, formerly you did not want to pay them, like ourselves; furthermore, being turned into a bird, you have when flying seen all lands and seas. Thus you have all human knowledge as well as that of birds. And hence we have come to you to beg you to direct us to some cosy town, in which one can repose as if on thick coverlets.

EPOPS. And are you looking for a greater city than Athens?

EUELPIDES. No, not a greater, but one more pleasant to dwell in.

EPOPS. Then you are looking for an aristocratic country.

EUELPIDES. I? Not at all! I hold the son of Scellias in horror.

EPOPS. But, after all, what sort of city would please you best?

EUELPIDES. A place where the following would be the most important business transacted. — Some friend would come knocking at the door quite early in the morning saying, "By Olympian Zeus, be at my house early, as soon as you have bathed, and bring your children too. I am giving a nuptial feast, so don't fail, or else don't cross my threshold when I am in distress."

EPOPS. Ah! that's what may be called being fond of hardships. And what say you?

PISTHETAERUS. My tastes are similar.

EPOPS. And they are?

PISTHETAERUS. I want a town where the father of a handsome lad will stop in the street and say to me reproachfully as if I had failed him, "Ah! Is this well done, Stilbonides! You met my son coming from the bath after the gymnasium and you neither spoke to him, nor embraced him, nor took him with you, nor ever once twitched his testicles. Would anyone call you an old friend of mine?"

EPOPS. Ah! wag, I see you are fond of suffering. But there is a city of delights, such as you want. 'Tis on the Red Sea.

EUELPIDES. Oh, no. Not a sea-port, where some fine morning the Salaminian

galley can appear, bringing a writ-server along. Have you no Greek town you can propose to us?

EPOPS. Why not choose Lepreum in Elis for your settlement?

EUELPIDES. By Zeus! I could not look at Lepreum without disgust, because of Melanthius.

EPOPS. Then, again, there is the Opuntian, where you could live.

EUELPIDES. I would not be Opuntian for a talent. But come, what is it like to live with the birds? You should know pretty well.

EPOPS. Why, 'tis not a disagreeable life. In the first place, one has no purse.

EUELPIDES. That does away with much roguery.

EPOPS. For food the gardens yield us white sesame, myrtle-berries, poppies and mint.

EUELPIDES. Why, 'tis the life of the newly-wed indeed.

PISTHETAERUS. Ha! I am beginning to see a great plan, which will transfer the supreme power to the birds, if you will but take my advice.

EPOPS. Take your advice? In what way?

PISTHETAERUS. In what way? Well, firstly, do not fly in all directions with open beak; it is not dignified. Among us, when we see a thoughtless man, we ask, "What sort of bird is this?" and Teleas answers, "'Tis a man who has no brain, a bird that has lost his head, a creature you cannot catch, for it never remains in any one place."

EPOPS. By Zeus himself! your jest hits the mark. What then is to be done?

PISTHETAERUS. Found a city.

EPOPS. We birds? But what sort of city should we build?

PISTHETAERUS. Oh, really, really! 'tis spoken like a fool! Look down.

EPOPS. I am looking.

PISTHETAERUS. Now look upwards.

EPOPS. I am looking.

PISTHETAERUS. Turn your head round.

EPOPS. Ah! ‘twill be pleasant for me, if I end in twisting my neck!

PISTHETAERUS. What have you seen?

EPOPS. The clouds and the sky.

PISTHETAERUS. Very well! is not this the pole of the birds then?

EPOPS. How their pole?

PISTHETAERUS. Or, if you like it, the land. And since it turns and passes through the whole universe, it is called, ‘pole.’ If you build and fortify it, you will turn your pole into a fortified city. In this way you will reign over mankind as you do over the grasshoppers and cause the gods to die of rabid hunger.

EPOPS. How so?

PISTHETAERUS. The air is ‘twixt earth and heaven. When we want to go to Delphi, we ask the Boeotians for leave of passage; in the same way, when men sacrifice to the gods, unless the latter pay you tribute, you exercise the right of every nation towards strangers and don’t allow the smoke of the sacrifices to pass through your city and territory.

EPOPS. By earth! by snares! by network! I never heard of anything more cleverly conceived; and, if the other birds approve, I am going to build the city along with you.

PISTHETAERUS. Who will explain the matter to them?

EPOPS. You must yourself. Before I came they were quite ignorant, but since I have lived with them I have taught them to speak.

PISTHETAERUS. But how can they be gathered together?

EPOPS. Easily. I will hasten down to the coppice to waken my dear Procné; as soon as they hear our voices, they will come to us hot wing.

PISTHETAERUS. My dear bird, lose no time, I beg. Fly at once into the coppice and awaken Procné.

EPOPS. Chase off drowsy sleep, dear companion. Let the sacred hymn gush from thy divine throat in melodious strains; roll forth in soft cadence your refreshing melodies to bewail the fate of Itys, which has been the cause of so many tears to us both. Your pure notes rise through the thick leaves of the yew-tree right up to the throne of Zeus, where Phoebus listens to you, Phoebus with his golden hair. And his ivory lyre responds to your plaintive accents; he gathers the choir of the gods and from their immortal lips rushes a sacred chant of blessed voices. *(The flute is played behind the scene.)* PISTHETAERUS. Oh! by Zeus! what a throat that little bird possesses. He has filled the whole coppice with honey-sweet melody!

EUELPIDES. Hush!

PISTHETAERUS. What's the matter?

EUELPIDES. Will you keep silence?

PISTHETAERUS. What for?

EUELPIDES. Epops is going to sing again.

EPOPS *(in the coppice)*. Epopoi, poi, popoi, epopoi, popoi, here, here, quick, quick, quick, my comrades in the air; all you, who pillage the fertile lands of the husbandmen, the numberless tribes who gather and devour the barley seeds, the swift flying race who sing so sweetly. And you whose gentle twitter resounds through the fields with the little cry of tio, tio, tio, tio, tio, tio, tio, tio; and you who hop about the branches of the ivy in the gardens; the mountain birds, who feed on the wild olive berries or the arbutus, hurry to come at my call, trioto, trioto, totobrix; you also, who snap up the sharp-stinging gnats in the marshy vales, and you who dwell in the fine plain of Marathon, all damp with dew, and you, the francolin with speckled wings; you too, the halcyons, who flit over the swelling waves of the sea, come hither to hear the tidings; let all the tribes of long-necked birds assemble here; know that a clever old man has come to us, bringing an entirely new idea and proposing great reforms. Let all come to the

debate here, here, here, here. Torotorotorotorotorotix, kikkobau, kikkobau, torotorotorotorotorolililix.

PISTHETAERUS. Can you see any bird?

EUELPIDES. By Phoebus, no! and yet I am straining my eyesight to scan the sky.

PISTHETAERUS. 'Twas really not worth Epops' while to go and bury himself in the thicket like a plover when a-hatching.

PHOENICOPTERUS. Torotina, torotina.

PISTHETAERUS. Hold, friend, here is another bird.

EUELPIDES. I' faith, yes! 'tis a bird, but of what kind? Isn't it a peacock?

PISTHETAERUS. Epops will tell us. What is this bird?

EPOPS. 'Tis not one of those you are used to seeing; 'tis a bird from the marshes.

PISTHETAERUS. Oh! oh! but he is very handsome with his wings as crimson as flame.

EPOPS. Undoubtedly; indeed he is called flamingo.

EUELPIDES. Hi! I say! You!

PISTHETAERUS. What are you shouting for?

EUELPIDES. Why, here's another bird.

PISTHETAERUS. Aye, indeed; 'tis a foreign bird too. What is this bird from beyond the mountains with a look as solemn as it is stupid?

EPOPS. He is called the Mede.

PISTHETAERUS. The Mede! But, by Heracles! how, if a Mede, has he flown here without a camel?

EUELPIDES. Here's another bird with a crest.

PISTHETAERUS. Ah! that's curious. I say, Epops, you are not the only one of your kind then?

EPOPS. This bird is the son of Philocles, who is the son of Epops; so that, you see, I am his grandfather; just as one might say, Hipponicus, the son of Callias, who is the son of Hipponicus.

PISTHETAERUS. Then this bird is Callias! Why, what a lot of his feathers he has lost!

EPOPS. That's because he is honest; so the informers set upon him and the women too pluck out his feathers.

PISTHETAERUS. By Posidon, do you see that many-coloured bird? What is his name?

EPOPS. This one? 'Tis the glutton.

PISTHETAERUS. Is there another glutton besides Cleonymus? But why, if he is Cleonymus, has he not thrown away his crest? But what is the meaning of all these crests? Have these birds come to contend for the double stadium prize?

EPOPS. They are like the Carians, who cling to the crests of their mountains for greater safety.

PISTHETAERUS. Oh, Posidon! do you see what swarms of birds are gathering here?

EUELPIDES. By Phoebus! what a cloud! The entrance to the stage is no longer visible, so closely do they fly together.

PISTHETAERUS. Here is the partridge.

EUELPIDES. Faith! there is the francolin.

PISTHETAERUS. There is the poachard.

EUELPIDES. Here is the kingfisher. And over yonder?

EPOPS. ’Tis the barber.

EUELPIDES. What? a bird a barber?

PISTHETAERUS. Why, Sporgilus is one. Here comes the owl.

EUELPIDES. And who is it brings an owl to Athens?

PISTHETAERUS. Here is the magpie, the turtle-dove, the swallow, the horned owl, the buzzard, the pigeon, the falcon, the ring-dove, the cuckoo, the red-foot, the red-cap, the purple-cap, the kestrel, the diver, the ousel, the osprey, the woodpecker.

EUELPIDES. Oh! oh! what a lot of birds! what a quantity of blackbirds! how they scold, how they come rushing up! What a noise! what a noise! Can they be bearing us ill-will? Oh! there! there! they are opening their beaks and staring at us.

PISTHETAERUS. Why, so they are.

CHORUS. Popopopopopopopoi. Where is he who called me? Where am I to find him?

EPOPS. I have been waiting for you this long while; I never fail in my word to my friends.

CHORUS. Titititititititi. What good thing have you to tell me?

EPOPS. Something that concerns our common safety, and that is just as pleasant as it is to the purpose. Two men, who are subtle reasoners, have come here to seek me.

CHORUS. Where? What? What are you saying?

EPOPS. I say, two old men have come from the abode of men to propose a vast and splendid scheme to us.

CHORUS. Oh! ’tis a horrible, unheard-of crime! What are you saying?

EPOPS. Nay! never let my words scare you.

CHORUS. What have you done then?

EPOPS. I have welcomed two men, who wish to live with us.

CHORUS. And you have dared to do that!

EPOPS. Aye, and am delighted at having done so.

CHORUS. Where are they?

EPOPS. In your midst, as I am.

CHORUS. Ah! ah! we are betrayed; 'tis sacrilege! Our friend, he who picked up corn-seeds in the same plains as ourselves, has violated our ancient laws; he has broken the oaths that bind all birds; he has laid a snare for me, he has handed us over to the attacks of that impious race which, throughout all time, has never ceased to war against us. As for this traitorous bird, we will decide his case later, but the two old men shall be punished forthwith; we are going to tear them to pieces.

PISTHETAERUS. 'Tis all over with us.

EUELPIDES. You are the sole cause of all our trouble. Why did you bring me from down yonder?

PISTHETAERUS. To have you with me.

EUELPIDES. Say rather to have me melt into tears.

PISTHETAERUS. Go to! you are talking nonsense.

EUELPIDES. How so?

PISTHETAERUS. How will you be able to cry when once your eyes are pecked out?

CHORUS. Io! io! forward to the attack, throw yourselves upon the foe, spill his blood; take to your wings and surround them on all sides. Woe to them! let us get to work with our beaks, let us devour them. Nothing can save them from our wrath, neither the mountain forests, nor the clouds that float in the sky, nor the

foaming deep. Come, peck, tear to ribbons. Where is the chief of the cohort? Let him engage the right wing.

EUELPIDES. This is the fatal moment. Where shall I fly to, unfortunate wretch that I am?

PISTHETAERUS. Stay! stop here!

EUELPIDES. That they may tear me to pieces?

PISTHETAERUS. And how do you think to escape them?

EUELPIDES. I don't know at all.

PISTHETAERUS. Come, I will tell you. We must stop and fight them. Let us arm ourselves with these stew-pots.

EUELPIDES. Why with the stew-pots?

PISTHETAERUS. The owl will not attack us.

EUELPIDES. But do you see all those hooked claws?

PISTHETAERUS. Seize the spit and pierce the foe on your side.

EUELPIDES. And how about my eyes?

PISTHETAERUS. Protect them with this dish or this vinegar-pot.

EUELPIDES. Oh! what cleverness! what inventive genius! You are a great general, even greater than Nicias, where stratagem is concerned.

CHORUS. Forward, forward, charge with your beaks! Come, no delay. Tear, pluck, strike, flay them, and first of all smash the stew-pot.

EPOPS. Oh, most cruel of all animals, why tear these two men to pieces, why kill them? What have they done to you? They belong to the same tribe, to the same family as my wife.

CHORUS. Are wolves to be spared? Are they not our most mortal foes? So let us punish them.

EPOPS. If they are your foes by nature, they are your friends in heart, and they come here to give you useful advice.

CHORUS. Advice or a useful word from their lips, from them, the enemies of my forbears!

EPOPS. The wise can often profit by the lessons of a foe, for caution is the mother of safety. ’Tis just such a thing as one will not learn from a friend and which an enemy compels you to know. To begin with, ’tis the foe and not the friend that taught cities to build high walls, to equip long vessels of war; and ’tis this knowledge that protects our children, our slaves and our wealth.

CHORUS. Well then, I agree, let us first hear them, for ’tis best; one can even learn something in an enemy’s school.

PISTHETAERUS. Their wrath seems to cool. Draw back a little.

EPOPS. ’Tis only justice, and you will thank me later.

CHORUS. Never have we opposed your advice up to now.

PISTHETAERUS. They are in a more peaceful mood; put down your stew-pot and your two dishes; spit in hand, doing duty for a spear, let us mount guard inside the camp close to the pot and watch in our arsenal closely; for we must not fly.

EUELPIDES. You are right. But where shall we be buried, if we die?

PISTHETAERUS. In the Ceramicus; for, to get a public funeral, we shall tell the Strategi that we fell at Orneae, fighting the country’s foes.

CHORUS. Return to your ranks and lay down your courage beside your wrath as the Hoplites do. Then let us ask these men who they are, whence they come, and with what intent. Here, Epops, answer me.

EPOPS. Are you calling me? What do you want of me?

CHORUS. Who are they? From what country?

EPOPS. Strangers, who have come from Greece, the land of the wise.

CHORUS. And what fate has led them hither to the land of the birds?

EPOPS. Their love for you and their wish to share your kind of life; to dwell and remain with you always.

CHORUS. Indeed, and what are their plans?

EPOPS. They are wonderful, incredible, unheard of.

CHORUS. Why, do they think to see some advantage that determines them to settle here? Are they hoping with our help to triumph over their foes or to be useful to their friends?

EPOPS. They speak of benefits so great it is impossible either to describe or conceive them; all shall be yours, all that we see here, there, above and below us; this they vouch for.

CHORUS. Are they mad?

EPOPS. They are the sanest people in the world.

CHORUS. Clever men?

EPOPS. The slyest of foxes, cleverness its very self, men of the world, cunning, the cream of knowing folk.

CHORUS. Tell them to speak and speak quickly; why, as I listen to you, I am beside myself with delight.

EPOPS. Here, you there, take all these weapons and hang them up inside close to the fire, near the figure of the god who presides there and under his protection; as for you, address the birds, tell them why I have gathered them together.

PISTHETAERUS. Not I, by Apollo, unless they agree with me as the little ape of an armourer agreed with his wife, not to bite me, nor pull me by the testicles, nor shove things up my….

CHORUS. You mean the…. *(Puts finger to bottom.)* Oh! be quite at ease.

PISTHETAERUS. No, I mean my eyes.

CHORUS. Agreed.

PISTHETAERUS. Swear it.

CHORUS. I swear it and, if I keep my promise, let judges and spectators give me the victory unanimously.

PISTHETAERUS. It is a bargain.

CHORUS. And if I break my word, may I succeed by one vote only.

HERALD. Hearken, ye people! Hoplites, pick up your weapons and return to your firesides; do not fail to read the decrees of dismissal we have posted.

CHORUS. Man is a truly cunning creature, but nevertheless explain. Perhaps you are going to show me some good way to extend my power, some way that I have not had the wit to find out and which you have discovered. Speak! 'tis to your own interest as well as to mine, for if you secure me some advantage, I will surely share it with you. But what object can have induced you to come among us? Speak boldly, for I shall not break the truce, — until you have told us all.

PISTHETAERUS. I am bursting with desire to speak; I have already mixed the dough of my address and nothing prevents me from kneading it…. Slave! bring the chaplet and water, which you must pour over my hands. Be quick!

EUELPIDES. Is it a question of feasting? What does it all mean?

PISTHETAERUS. By Zeus, no! but I am hunting for fine, tasty words to break down the hardness of their hearts. — I grieve so much for you, who at one time were kings….

CHORUS. We kings! Over whom?

PISTHETAERUS. … of all that exists, firstly of me and of this man, even of Zeus himself. Your race is older than Saturn, the Titans and the Earth.

CHORUS. What, older than the Earth!

PISTHETAERUS. By Phoebus, yes.

CHORUS. By Zeus, but I never knew that before!

PISTHETAERUS. 'Tis because you are ignorant and heedless, and have never read your Aesop. 'Tis he who tells us that the lark was born before all other creatures, indeed before the Earth; his father died of sickness, but the Earth did not exist then; he remained unburied for five days, when the bird in its dilemma decided, for want of a better place, to entomb its father in its own head.

EUELPIDES. So that the lark's father is buried at Cephalae.

EPOPS. Hence, if we existed before the Earth, before the gods, the kingship belongs to us by right of priority.

EUELPIDES. Undoubtedly, but sharpen your beak well; Zeus won't be in a hurry to hand over his sceptre to the woodpecker.

PISTHETAERUS. It was not the gods, but the birds, who were formerly the masters and kings over men; of this I have a thousand proofs. First of all, I will point you to the cock, who governed the Persians before all other monarchs, before Darius and Megabyzus. 'Tis in memory of his reign that he is called the Persian bird.

EUELPIDES. For this reason also, even to-day, he alone of all the birds wears his tiara straight on his head, like the Great King.

PISTHETAERUS. He was so strong, so great, so feared, that even now, on account of his ancient power, everyone jumps out of bed as soon as ever he crows at daybreak. Blacksmiths, potters, tanners, shoemakers, bathmen, corn-dealers, lyre-makers and armourers, all put on their shoes and go to work before it is daylight.

EUELPIDES. I can tell you something anent that. 'Twas the cock's fault that I lost a splendid tunic of Phrygian wool. I was at a feast in town, given to celebrate the birth of a child; I had drunk pretty freely and had just fallen asleep, when a cock, I suppose in a greater hurry than the rest, began to crow. I thought it was dawn and set out for Alimos. I had hardly got beyond the walls, when a footpad struck me in the back with his bludgeon; down I went and wanted to shout, but he had already made off with my mantle.

PISTHETAERUS. Formerly also the kite was ruler and king over the Greeks.

EPOPS. The Greeks?

PISTHETAERUS. And when he was king, ’twas he who first taught them to fall on their knees before the kites.

EUELPIDES. By Zeus! ’tis what I did myself one day on seeing a kite; but at the moment I was on my knees, and leaning backwards with mouth agape, I bolted an obolus and was forced to carry my bag home empty.

PISTHETAERUS. The cuckoo was king of Egypt and of the whole of Phoenicia. When he called out “cuckoo,” all the Phoenicians hurried to the fields to reap their wheat and their barley.

EUELPIDES. Hence no doubt the proverb, “Cuckoo! cuckoo! go to the fields, ye circumcised.”

PISTHETAERUS. So powerful were the birds, that the kings of Grecian cities, Agamemnon, Menelaus, for instance, carried a bird on the tip of their sceptres, who had his share of all presents.

EUELPIDES. That I didn’t know and was much astonished when I saw Priam come upon the stage in the tragedies with a bird, which kept watching Lysicrates to see if he got any present.

PISTHETAERUS. But the strongest proof of all is, that Zeus, who now reigns, is represented as standing with an eagle on his head as a symbol of his royalty; his daughter has an owl, and Phoebus, as his servant, has a hawk.

EUELPIDES. By Demeter, ’tis well spoken. But what are all these birds doing in heaven?

PISTHETAERUS. When anyone sacrifices and, according to the rite, offers the entrails to the gods, these birds take their share before Zeus. Formerly the men always swore by birds and never by the gods; even now Lampon swears by the goose, when he wants to lie…. Thus ’tis clear that you were great and sacred, but now you are looked upon as slaves, as fools, as Helots; stones are thrown at you as at raving madmen, even in holy places. A crowd of bird-catchers sets snares, traps, limed-twigs and nets of all sorts for you; you are caught, you are sold in heaps and the buyers finger you over to be certain you are fat. Again, if they would but serve you up simply roasted; but they rasp cheese into a mixture of

oil, vinegar and laserwort, to which another sweet and greasy sauce is added, and the whole is poured scalding hot over your back, for all the world as if you were diseased meat.

CHORUS. Man, your words have made my heart bleed; I have groaned over the treachery of our fathers, who knew not how to transmit to us the high rank they held from their forefathers. But 'tis a benevolent Genius, a happy Fate, that sends you to us; you shall be our deliverer and I place the destiny of my little ones and my own in your hands with every confidence. But hasten to tell me what must be done; we should not be worthy to live, if we did not seek to regain our royalty by every possible means, PISTHETAERUS. First I advise that the birds gather together in one city and that they build a wall of great bricks, like that at Babylon, round the plains of the air and the whole region of space that divides earth from heaven.

EPOPS. Oh, Cebriones! oh, Porphyrion! what a terribly strong place!

PISTHETAERUS. This, this being well done and completed, you demand back the empire from Zeus; if he will not agree, if he refuses and does not at once confess himself beaten, you declare a sacred war against him and forbid the gods henceforward to pass through your country with standing organ, as hitherto, for the purpose of fondling their Alcmenas, their Alopés, or their Semelés; if they try to pass through, you infibulate them with rings so that they can fuck no longer. You send another messenger to mankind, who will proclaim to them that the birds are kings, that for the future they must first of all sacrifice to them, and only afterwards to the gods; that it is fitting to appoint to each deity the bird that has most in common with it. For instance, are they sacrificing to Aphrodité, let them at the same time offer barley to the coot; are they immolating a sheep to Posidon, let them consecrate wheat in honour of the duck; is a steer being offered to Heracles, let honey-cakes be dedicated to the gull; is a goat being slain for King Zeus, there is a King-Bird, the wren, to whom the sacrifice of a male gnat is due before Zeus himself even.

EUELPIDES. This notion of an immolated gnat delights me! And now let the great Zeus thunder!

EPOPS. But how will mankind recognize us as gods and not as jays? Us, who have wings and fly?

PISTHETAERUS. You talk rubbish! Hermes is a god and has wings and flies, and so do many other gods. First of all, Victory flies with golden wings, Eros is undoubtedly winged too, and Iris is compared by Homer to a timorous dove. If men in their blindness do not recognize you as gods and continue to worship the dwellers in Olympus, then a cloud of sparrows greedy for corn must descend upon their fields and eat up all their seeds; we shall see then if Demeter will mete them out any wheat.

EUELPIDES. By Zeus, she'll take good care she does not, and you will see her inventing a thousand excuses.

PISTHETAERUS. The crows too will prove your divinity to them by pecking out the eyes of their flocks and of their draught-oxen; and then let Apollo cure them, since he is a physician and is paid for the purpose.

EUELPIDES. Oh! don't do that! Wait first until I have sold my two young bullocks.

PISTHETAERUS. If on the other hand they recognize that you are God, the principle of life, that you are Earth, Saturn, Posidon, they shall be loaded with benefits.

EPOPS Name me one of these then.

PISTHETAERUS. Firstly, the locusts shall not eat up their vine-blossoms; a legion of owls and kestrels will devour them. Moreover, the gnats and the gall-bugs shall no longer ravage the figs; a flock of thrushes shall swallow the whole host down to the very last.

EPOPS. And how shall we give wealth to mankind? This is their strongest passion.

PISTHETAERUS. When they consult the omens, you will point them to the richest mines, you will reveal the paying ventures to the diviner, and not another shipwreck will happen or sailor perish.

EPOPS. No more shall perish? How is that?

PISTHETAERUS. When the auguries are examined before starting on a voyage, some bird will not fail to say, "Don't start! there will be a storm," or else, "Go!

you will make a most profitable venture."

EUELPIDES. I shall buy a trading-vessel and go to sea. I will not stay with you.

PISTHETAERUS. You will discover treasures to them, which were buried in former times, for you know them. Do not all men say, "None know where my treasure lies, unless perchance it be some bird."

EUELPIDES. I shall sell my boat and buy a spade to unearth the vessels.

EPOPS. And how are we to give them health, which belongs to the gods?

PISTHETAERUS. If they are happy, is not that the chief thing towards health? The miserable man is never well.

EPOPS. Old Age also dwells in Olympus. How will they get at it? Must they die in early youth?

PISTHETAERUS. Why, the birds, by Zeus, will add three hundred years to their life.

EPOPS. From whom will they take them?

PISTHETAERUS. From whom? Why, from themselves. Don't you know the cawing crow lives five times as long as a man?

EUELPIDES. Ah! ah! these are far better kings for us than Zeus!

PISTHETAERUS. Far better, are they not? And firstly, we shall not have to build them temples of hewn stone, closed with gates of gold; they will dwell amongst the bushes and in the thickets of green oak; the most venerated of birds will have no other temple than the foliage of the olive tree; we shall not go to Delphi or to Ammon to sacrifice; but standing erect in the midst of arbutus and wild olives and holding forth our hands filled with wheat and barley, we shall pray them to admit us to a share of the blessings they enjoy and shall at once obtain them for a few grains of wheat.

CHORUS. Old man, whom I detested, you are now to me the dearest of all; never shall I, if I can help it, fail to follow your advice. Inspirited by your words, I threaten my rivals the gods, and I swear that if you march in alliance with me

against the gods and are faithful to our just, loyal and sacred bond, we shall soon have shattered their sceptre. ’Tis our part to undertake the toil, ’tis yours to advise.

EPOPS. By Zeus! ’tis no longer the time to delay and loiter like Nicias; let us act as promptly as possible…. In the first place, come, enter my nest built of brushwood and blades of straw, and tell me your names.

PISTHETAERUS. That is soon done; my name is Pisthetaerus.

EPOPS. And his?

PISTHETAERUS. Euelpides, of the deme of Thria.

EPOPS. Good! and good luck to you.

PISTHETAERUS. We accept the omen.

EPOPS. Come in here.

PISTHETAERUS. Very well, ’tis you who lead us and must introduce us.

EPOPS. Come then.

PISTHETAERUS. Oh! my god! do come back here. Hi! tell us how we are to follow you. You can fly, but we cannot.

EPOPS. Well, well.

PISTHETAERUS. Remember Aesop’s fables. It is told there, that the fox fared very ill, because he had made an alliance with the eagle.

EPOPS. Be at ease. You shall eat a certain root and wings will grow on your shoulders.

PISTHETAERUS. Then let us enter. Xanthias and Manes, pick up our baggage.

CHORUS. Hi! Epops! do you hear me?

EPOPS. What’s the matter?

CHORUS. Take them off to dine well and call your mate, the melodious Procné, whose songs are worthy of the Muses; she will delight our leisure moments.

PISTHETAERUS. Oh! I conjure you, accede to their wish; for this delightful bird will leave her rushes at the sound of your voice; for the sake of the gods, let her come here, so that we may contemplate the nightingale.

EPOPS. Let it be as you desire. Come forth, Procné, show yourself to these strangers.

PISTHETAERUS. Oh! great Zeus! what a beautiful little bird! what a dainty form! what brilliant plumage!

EUELPIDES. Do you know how dearly I should like to split her legs for her?

PISTHETAERUS. She is dazzling all over with gold, like a young girl.

EUELPIDES. Oh! how I should like to kiss her!

PISTHETAERUS. Why, wretched man, she has two little sharp points on her beak.

EUELPIDES. I would treat her like an egg, the shell of which we remove before eating it; I would take off her mask and then kiss her pretty face.

EPOPS. Let us go in.

PISTHETAERUS. Lead the way, and may success attend us.

CHORUS. Lovable golden bird, whom I cherish above all others, you, whom I associate with all my songs, nightingale, you have come, you have come, to show yourself to me and to charm me with your notes. Come, you, who play spring melodies upon the harmonious flute, lead off our anapaests.

Weak mortals, chained to the earth, creatures of clay as frail as the foliage of the woods, you unfortunate race, whose life is but darkness, as unreal as a shadow, the illusion of a dream, hearken to us, who are immortal beings, ethereal, ever young and occupied with eternal thoughts, for we shall teach you about all celestial matters; you shall know thoroughly what is the nature of the birds, what the origin of the gods, of the rivers, of Erebus, and Chaos; thanks to us, Prodicus

will envy you your knowledge.

At the beginning there was only Chaos, Night, dark Erebus, and deep Tartarus. Earth, the air and heaven had no existence. Firstly, black-winged Night laid a germless egg in the bosom of the infinite deeps of Erebus, and from this, after the revolution of long ages, sprang the graceful Eros with his glittering golden wings, swift as the whirlwinds of the tempest. He mated in deep Tartarus with dark Chaos, winged like himself, and thus hatched forth our race, which was the first to see the light. That of the Immortals did not exist until Eros had brought together all the ingredients of the world, and from their marriage Heaven, Ocean, Earth and the imperishable race of blessed gods sprang into being. Thus our origin is very much older than that of the dwellers in Olympus. We are the offspring of Eros; there are a thousand proofs to show it. We have wings and we lend assistance to lovers. How many handsome youths, who had sworn to remain insensible, have not been vanquished by our power and have yielded themselves to their lovers when almost at the end of their youth, being led away by the gift of a quail, a waterfowl, a goose, or a cock.

And what important services do not the birds render to mortals! First of all, they mark the seasons for them, springtime, winter, and autumn. Does the screaming crane migrate to Libya, — it warns the husbandman to sow, the pilot to take his ease beside his tiller hung up in his dwelling, and Orestes to weave a tunic, so that the rigorous cold may not drive him any more to strip other folk. When the kite reappears, he tells of the return of spring and of the period when the fleece of the sheep must be clipped. Is the swallow in sight? All hasten to sell their warm tunic and to buy some light clothing. We are your Ammon, Delphi, Dodona, your Phoebus Apollo. Before undertaking anything, whether a business transaction, a marriage, or the purchase of food, you consult the birds by reading the omens, and you give this name of omen to all signs that tell of the future. With you a word is an omen, you call a sneeze an omen, a meeting an omen, an unknown sound an omen, a slave or an ass an omen. Is it not clear that we are a prophetic Apollo to you? If you recognize us as gods, we shall be your divining Muses, through us you will know the winds and the seasons, summer, winter, and the temperate months. We shall not withdraw ourselves to the highest clouds like Zeus, but shall be among you and shall give to you and to your children and the children of your children, health and wealth, long life, peace, youth, laughter, songs and feasts; in short, you will all be so well off, that you will be weary and satiated with enjoyment.

Oh, rustic Muse of such varied note, tio, tio, tio, tiotinx, I sing with you in the groves and on the mountain tops, tio, tio, tio, tio, tiotinx. I pour forth sacred strains from my golden throat in honour of the god Pan, tio, tio, tio, tiotinx, from the top of the thickly leaved ash, and my voice mingles with the mighty choirs who extol Cybelé on the mountain tops, totototototototototinx. 'Tis to our concerts that Phrynicus comes to pillage like a bee the ambrosia of his songs, the sweetness of which so charms the ear, tio, tio, tio, tio, tinx.

If there be one of you spectators who wishes to spend the rest of his life quietly among the birds, let him come to us. All that is disgraceful and forbidden by law on earth is on the contrary honourable among us, the birds. For instance, among you 'tis a crime to beat your father, but with us 'tis an estimable deed; it's considered fine to run straight at your father and hit him, saying, "Come, lift your spur if you want to fight." The runaway slave, whom you brand, is only a spotted francolin with us. Are you Phrygian like Spintharus? Among us you would be the Phrygian bird, the goldfinch, of the race of Philemon. Are you a slave and a Carian like Execestides? Among us you can create yourself forefathers; you can always find relations. Does the son of Pisias want to betray the gates of the city to the foe? Let him become a partridge, the fitting offspring of his father; among us there is no shame in escaping as cleverly as a partridge.

So the swans on the banks of the Hebrus, tio, tio, tio, tio, tiotinx, mingle their voices to serenade Apollo, tio, tio, tio, tio, tiotinx, flapping their wings the while, tio, tio, tio, tio, tiotinx; their notes reach beyond the clouds of heaven; all the dwellers in the forests stand still with astonishment and delight; a calm rests upon the waters, and the Graces and the choirs in Olympus catch up the strain, tio, tio, tio, tio, tiotinx.

There is nothing more useful nor more pleasant than to have wings. To begin with, just let us suppose a spectator to be dying with hunger and to be weary of the choruses of the tragic poets; if he were winged, he would fly off, go home to dine and come back with his stomach filled. Some Patroclides in urgent need would not have to soil his cloak, but could fly off, satisfy his requirements, and, having recovered his breath, return. If one of you, it matters not who, had adulterous relations and saw the husband of his mistress in the seats of the senators, he might stretch his wings, fly thither, and, having appeased his craving, resume his place. Is it not the most priceless gift of all, to be winged? Look at Diitrephes! His wings were only wicker-work ones, and yet he got himself chosen Phylarch and then Hipparch; from being nobody, he has risen to

be famous; ’tis now the finest gilded cock of his tribe.

PISTHETAERUS. Halloa! What’s this? By Zeus! I never saw anything so funny in all my life.

EUELPIDES. What makes you laugh?

PISTHETAERUS. ’Tis your bits of wings. D’you know what you look like? Like a goose painted by some dauber-fellow.

EUELPIDES. And you look like a close-shaven blackbird.

PISTHETAERUS. ’Tis ourselves asked for this transformation, and, as Aeschylus has it, “These are no borrowed feathers, but truly our own.”

EPOPS. Come now, what must be done?

PISTHETAERUS. First give our city a great and famous name, then sacrifice to the gods.

EUELPIDES. I think so too.

EPOPS. Let’s see. What shall our city be called?

PISTHETAERUS. Will you have a high-sounding Laconian name? Shall we call it Sparta?

EUELPIDES. What! call my town Sparta? Why, I would not use esparto for my bed, even though I had nothing but bands of rushes.

PISTHETAERUS. Well then, what name can you suggest?

EUELPIDES. Some name borrowed from the clouds, from these lofty regions in which we dwell — in short, some well-known name.

PISTHETAERUS. Do you like Nephelococcygia?

EPOPS. Oh! capital! truly ’tis a brilliant thought!

EUELPIDES. Is it in Nephelococcygia that all the wealth of Theogenes and most of Aeschines’ is?

PISTHETAERUS. No, ’tis rather the plain of Phlegra, where the gods withered the pride of the sons of the Earth with their shafts.

EUELPIDES. Oh! what a splendid city! But what god shall be its patron? for whom shall we weave the peplus?

PISTHETAERUS. Why not choose Athené Polias?

EUELPIDES. Oh! what a well-ordered town ’twould be to have a female deity armed from head to foot, while Clisthenes was spinning!

PISTHETAERUS. Who then shall guard the Pelargicon?

EPOPS. One of ourselves, a bird of Persian strain, who is everywhere proclaimed to be the bravest of all, a true chick of Ares.

EUELPIDES. Oh! noble chick! what a well-chosen god for a rocky home!

PISTHETAERUS. Come! into the air with you to help the workers, who are building the wall; carry up rubble, strip yourself to mix the mortar, take up the hod, tumble down the ladder, an you like, post sentinels, keep the fire smouldering beneath the ashes, go round the walls, bell in hand, and go to sleep up there yourself; then despatch two heralds, one to the gods above, the other to mankind on earth and come back here.

EUELPIDES. As for yourself, remain here, and may the plague take you for a troublesome fellow!

PISTHETAERUS. Go, friend, go where I send you, for without you my orders cannot be obeyed. For myself, I want to sacrifice to the new god, and I am going to summon the priest who must preside at the ceremony. Slaves! slaves! bring forward the basket and the lustral water.

CHORUS. I do as you do, and I wish as you wish, and I implore you to address powerful and solemn prayers to the gods, and in addition to immolate a sheep as a token of our gratitude. Let us sing the Pythian chant in honour of the god, and let Chaeris accompany our voices.

PISTHETAERUS *(to the flute-player)*. Enough! but, by Heracles! what is this? Great gods! I have seen many prodigious things, but I never saw a muzzled

raven.

EPOPS. Priest! ’tis high time! Sacrifice to the new gods.

PRIEST. I begin, but where is he with the basket? Pray to the Vesta of the birds, to the kite, who presides over the hearth, and to all the god and goddess-birds who dwell in Olympus.

CHORUS. Oh! Hawk, the sacred guardian of Sunium, oh, god of the storks!

PRIEST. Pray to the swan of Delos, to Latona the mother of the quails, and to Artemis, the goldfinch.

PISTHETAERUS. ’Tis no longer Artemis Colaenis, but Artemis the goldfinch.

PRIEST. And to Bacchus, the finch and Cybelé, the ostrich and mother of the gods and mankind.

CHORUS. Oh! sovereign ostrich, Cybelé, the mother of Cleocritus, grant health and safety to the Nephelococcygians as well as to the dwellers in Chios….

PISTHETAERUS. The dwellers in Chios! Ah! I am delighted they should be thus mentioned on all occasions.

CHORUS. … to the heroes, the birds, to the sons of heroes, to the porphyrion, the pelican, the spoon-bill, the redbreast, the grouse, the peacock, the horned-owl, the teal, the bittern, the heron, the stormy petrel, the fig-pecker, the titmouse….

PISTHETAERUS. Stop! stop! you drive me crazy with your endless list. Why, wretch, to what sacred feast are you inviting the vultures and the sea-eagles? Don’t you see that a single kite could easily carry off the lot at once? Begone, you and your fillets and all; I shall know how to complete the sacrifice by myself.

PRIEST. It is imperative that I sing another sacred chant for the rite of the lustral water, and that I invoke the immortals, or at least one of them, provided always that you have some suitable food to offer him; from what I see here, in the shape of gifts, there is naught whatever but horn and hair.

PISTHETAERUS. Let us address our sacrifices and our prayers to the winged gods.

A POET. Oh, Muse! celebrate happy Nephelococcygia in your hymns.

PISTHETAERUS. What have we here? Where do you come from, tell me? Who are you?

POET. I am he whose language is sweeter than honey, the zealous slave of the Muses, as Homer has it.

PISTHETAERUS. You a slave! and yet you wear your hair long?

POET. No, but the fact is all we poets are the assiduous slaves of the Muses according to Homer.

PISTHETAERUS. In truth your little cloak is quite holy too through zeal! But, poet, what ill wind drove you here?

POET. I have composed verses in honour of your Nephelococcygia, a host of splendid dithyrambs and parthenians, worthy of Simonides himself.

PISTHETAERUS. And when did you compose them? How long since?

POET. Oh! 'tis long, aye, very long, that I have sung in honour of this city.

PISTHETAERUS. But I am only celebrating its foundation with this sacrifice; I have only just named it, as is done with little babies.

POET. "Just as the chargers fly with the speed of the wind, so does the voice of the Muses take its flight. Oh! thou noble founder of the town of Aetna, thou, whose name recalls the holy sacrifices, make us such gift as thy generous heart shall suggest."

PISTHETAERUS. He will drive us silly if we do not get rid of him by some present. Here! you, who have a fur as well as your tunic, take it off and give it to this clever poet. Come, take this fur; you look to me to be shivering with cold.

POET. My Muse will gladly accept this gift; but engrave these verses of Pindar's on your mind.

PISTHETAERUS. Oh! what a pest! 'Tis impossible then to be rid of him.

POET. "Straton wanders among the Scythian nomads, but has no linen garment. He is sad at only wearing an animal's pelt and no tunic." Do you conceive my bent?

PISTHETAERUS. I understand that you want me to offer you a tunic. Hi! you *(to Euelpides)*, take off yours; we must help the poet…. Come, you, take it and begone.

POET. I am going, and these are the verses that I address to this city:
"Phoebus of the golden throne, celebrate this shivery, freezing city; I
have travelled through fruitful and snow-covered plains. Tralala!
Tralala!"

PISTHETAERUS. What are you chanting us about frosts? Thanks to the tunic, you no longer fear them. Ah! by Zeus! I could not have believed this cursed fellow could so soon have learnt the way to our city. Come, priest, take the lustral water and circle the altar.

PRIEST. Let all keep silence!

A PROPHET. Let not the goat be sacrificed.

PISTHETAERUS. Who are you?

PROPHET. Who am I? A prophet.

PISTHETAERUS. Get you gone.

PROPHET. Wretched man, insult not sacred things. For there is an oracle of Bacis, which exactly applies to Nephelococcygia.

PISTHETAERUS. Why did you not reveal it to me before I founded my city?

PROPHET. The divine spirit was against it.

PISTHETAERUS. Well, 'tis best to know the terms of the oracle.

PROPHET. "But when the wolves and the white crows shall dwell together

between Corinth and Sicyon…."

PISTHETAERUS. But how do the Corinthians concern me?

PROPHET. 'Tis the regions of the air that Bacis indicated in this manner. "They must first sacrifice a white-fleeced goat to Pandora, and give the prophet, who first reveals my words, a good cloak and new sandals."

PISTHETAERUS. Are the sandals there?

PROPHET.

Read. "And besides this a goblet of wine and a good share of the entrails of the victim."

PISTHETAERUS. Of the entrails — is it so written?

PROPHET. Read. "If you do as I command, divine youth, you shall be an eagle among the clouds; if not, you shall be neither turtle-dove, nor eagle, nor woodpecker."

PISTHETAERUS. Is all that there?

PROPHET. Read.

PISTHETAERUS. This oracle in no sort of way resembles the one Apollo dictated to me: "If an impostor comes without invitation to annoy you during the sacrifice and to demand a share of the victim, apply a stout stick to his ribs."

PROPHET. You are drivelling.

PISTHETAERUS. "And don't spare him, were he an eagle from out of the clouds, were it Lampon himself or the great Diopithes."

PROPHET. Is all that there?

PISTHETAERUS. Here, read it yourself, and go and hang yourself.

PROPHET. Oh! unfortunate wretch that I am.

PISTHETAERUS. Away with you, and take your prophecies elsewhere.

METON. I have come to you.

PISTHETAERUS. Yet another pest. What have you come to do? What's your plan? What's the purpose of your journey? Why these splendid buskins?

METON. I want to survey the plains of the air for you and to parcel them into lots.

PISTHETAERUS. In the name of the gods, who are you?

METON. Who am I? Meton, known throughout Greece and at Colonus.

PISTHETAERUS. What are these things?

METON. Tools for measuring the air. In truth, the spaces in the air have precisely the form of a furnace. With this bent ruler I draw a line from top to bottom; from one of its points I describe a circle with the compass. Do you understand?

PISTHETAERUS. Not the very least.

METON. With the straight ruler I set to work to inscribe a square within this circle; in its centre will be the marketplace, into which all the straight streets will lead, converging to this centre like a star, which, although only orbicular, sends forth its rays in a straight line from all sides.

PISTHETAERUS. Meton, you new Thales….

METON. What d'you want with me?

PISTHETAERUS. I want to give you a proof of my friendship. Use your legs.

METON. Why, what have I to fear?

PISTHETAERUS. 'Tis the same here as in Sparta. Strangers are driven away, and blows rain down as thick as hail.

METON. Is there sedition in your city?

PISTHETAERUS. No, certainly not.

METON. What's wrong then?

PISTHETAERUS. We are agreed to sweep all quacks and impostors far from our borders.

METON. Then I'm off.

PISTHETAERUS. I fear me 'tis too late. The thunder growls already. *(Beats him.)*

METON. Oh, woe! oh, woe!

PISTHETAERUS. I warned you. Now, be off, and do your surveying somewhere else. *(Meton takes to his heels.)* AN INSPECTOR. Where are the Proxeni?

PISTHETAERUS. Who is this Sardanapalus?

INSPECTOR. I have been appointed by lot to come to Nephelococcygia as inspector.

PISTHETAERUS. An inspector! and who sends you here, you rascal?

INSPECTOR. A decree of Taleas.

PISTHETAERUS. Will you just pocket your salary, do nothing, and be off?

INSPECTOR. I' faith! that I will; I am urgently needed to be at Athens to attend the assembly; for I am charged with the interests of Pharnaces.

PISTHETAERUS. Take it then, and be off. See, here is your salary. *(Beats him.)*

INSPECTOR. What does this mean?

PISTHETAERUS. 'Tis the assembly where you have to defend Pharnaces.

INSPECTOR. You shall testify that they dare to strike me, the inspector.

PISTHETAERUS. Are you not going to clear out with your urns. 'Tis not to be believed; they send us inspectors before we have so much as paid sacrifice to the gods.

A DEALER IN DECREES. “If the Nephelococcygian does wrong to the Athenian….”

PISTHETAERUS. Now whatever are these cursed parchments?

DEALER IN DECREES. I am a dealer in decrees, and I have come here to sell you the new laws.

PISTHETAERUS. Which?

DEALER IN DECREES. “The Nephelococcygians shall adopt the same weights, measures and decrees as the Olophyxians.”

PISTHETAERUS. And you shall soon be imitating the Ototyxians. *(Beats him.)*

DEALER IN DECREES. Hullo! what are you doing?

PISTHETAERUS. Now will you be off with your decrees? For I am going to let *you* see some severe ones.

INSPECTOR *(returning)*. I summon Pisthetaerus for outrage for the month of Munychion.

PISTHETAERUS. Ha! my friend! are you still there?

DEALER IN DECREES. “Should anyone drive away the magistrates and not receive them, according to the decree duly posted…”

PISTHETAERUS. What! rascal! you are there too?

INSPECTOR. Woe to you! I’ll have you condemned to a fine of ten thousand drachmae.

PISTHETAERUS. And I’ll smash your urns.

INSPECTOR. Do you recall that evening when you stooled against the column where the decrees are posted?

PISTHETAERUS. Here! here! let him be seized. *(The inspectors run off.)*
Well! don’t you want to stop any longer?

PRIEST. Let us get indoors as quick as possible; we will sacrifice the goat inside.

CHORUS. Henceforth it is to me that mortals must address their sacrifices and their prayers. Nothing escapes my sight nor my might. My glance embraces the universe, I preserve the fruit in the flower by destroying the thousand kinds of voracious insects the soil produces, which attack the trees and feed on the germ when it has scarcely formed in the calyx; I destroy those who ravage the balmy terrace gardens like a deadly plague; all these gnawing crawling creatures perish beneath the lash of my wing. I hear it proclaimed everywhere: "A talent for him who shall kill Diagoras of Melos, and a talent for him who destroys one of the dead tyrants." We likewise wish to make our proclamation: "A talent to him among you who shall kill Philocrates, the Strouthian; four, if he brings him to us alive. For this Philocrates skewers the finches together and sells them at the rate of an obolus for seven. He tortures the thrushes by blowing them out, so that they may look bigger, sticks their own feathers into the nostrils of blackbirds, and collects pigeons, which he shuts up and forces them, fastened in a net, to decoy others." That is what we wish to proclaim. And if anyone is keeping birds shut up in his yard, let him hasten to let them loose; those who disobey shall be seized by the birds and we shall put them in chains, so that in their turn they may decoy other men.

Happy indeed is the race of winged birds who need no cloak in winter! Neither do I fear the relentless rays of the fiery dog-days; when the divine grasshopper, intoxicated with the sunlight, when noon is burning the ground, is breaking out into shrill melody, my home is beneath the foliage in the flowery meadows. I winter in deep caverns, where I frolic with the mountain nymphs, while in spring I despoil the gardens of the Graces and gather the white, virgin berry on the myrtle bushes.

I want now to speak to the judges about the prize they are going to award; if they are favourable to us, we will load them with benefits far greater than those Paris received. Firstly, the owls of Laurium, which every judge desires above all things, shall never be wanting to you; you shall see them homing with you, building their nests in your money-bags and laying coins. Besides, you shall be housed like the gods, for we shall erect gables over your dwellings; if you hold some public post and want to do a little pilfering, we will give you the sharp claws of a hawk. Are you dining in town, we will provide you with crops. But, if your award is against us, don't fail to have metal covers fashioned for

yourselves, like those they place over statues; else, look out! for the day you wear a white tunic all the birds will soil it with their droppings.

PISTHETAERUS. Birds! the sacrifice is propitious. But I see no messenger coming from the wall to tell us what is happening. Ah! here comes one running himself out of breath as though he were running the Olympic stadium.

MESSENGER. Where, where is he? Where, where, where is he? Where, where, where is he? Where is Pisthetaerus, our leader?

PISTHETAERUS. Here am I.

MESSENGER. The wall is finished.

PISTHETAERUS. That's good news.

MESSENGER. 'Tis a most beautiful, a most magnificent work of art. The wall is so broad, that Proxenides, the Braggartian, and Theogenes could pass each other in their chariots, even if they were drawn by steeds as big as the Trojan horse.

PISTHETAERUS. 'Tis wonderful!

MESSENGER. Its length is one hundred stadia; I measured it myself.

PISTHETAERUS. A decent length, by Posidon! And who built such a wall?

MESSENGER. Birds — birds only; they had neither Egyptian brickmaker, nor stonemason, nor carpenter; the birds did it all themselves, I could hardly believe my eyes. Thirty thousand cranes came from Libya with a supply of stones, intended for the foundations. The water-rails chiselled them with their beaks. Ten thousand storks were busy making bricks; plovers and other water fowl carried water into the air.

PISTHETAERUS. And who carried the mortar?

MESSENGER. Herons, in hods.

PISTHETAERUS. But how could they put the mortar into hods?

MESSENGER. Oh! ’twas a truly clever invention; the geese used their feet like spades; they buried them in the pile of mortar and then emptied them into the hods.

PISTHETAERUS. Ah! to what use cannot feet be put?

MESSENGER. You should have seen how eagerly the ducks carried bricks. To complete the tale, the swallows came flying to the work, their beaks full of mortar and their trowel on their back, just the way little children are carried.

PISTHETAERUS. Who would want paid servants after this? But, tell me, who did the woodwork?

MESSENGER. Birds again, and clever carpenters too, the pelicans, for they squared up the gates with their beaks in such a fashion that one would have thought they were using axes; the noise was just like a dockyard. Now the whole wall is tight everywhere, securely bolted and well guarded; it is patrolled, bell in hand; the sentinels stand everywhere and beacons burn on the towers. But I must run off to clean myself; the rest is your business.

CHORUS. Well! what do you say to it? Are you not astonished at the wall being completed so quickly?

PISTHETAERUS. By the gods, yes, and with good reason. ’Tis really not to be believed. But here comes another messenger from the wall to bring us some further news! What a fighting look he has!

SECOND MESSENGER. Oh! oh! oh! oh! oh! oh!

PISTHETAERUS. What’s the matter?

SECOND MESSENGER. A horrible outrage has occurred; a god sent by Zeus has passed through our gates and has penetrated the realms of the air without the knowledge of the jays, who are on guard in the daytime.

PISTHETAERUS. Tis an unworthy and criminal deed. What god was it?

SECOND MESSENGER. We don’t know that. All we know is, that he has got wings.

PISTHETAERUS. Why were not guards sent against him at once?

SECOND MESSENGER. We have despatched thirty thousand hawks of the legion of mounted archers. All the hook-clawed birds are moving against him, the kestrel, the buzzard, the vulture, the great-horned owl; they cleave the air, so that it resounds with the flapping of their wings; they are looking everywhere for the god, who cannot be far away; indeed, if I mistake not, he is coming from yonder side.

PISTHETAERUS. All arm themselves with slings and bows! This way, all our soldiers; shoot and strike! Some one give me a sling!

CHORUS. War, a terrible war is breaking out between us and the gods! Come, let each one guard the Air, the son of Erebus, in which the clouds float. Take care no immortal enters it without your knowledge. Scan all sides with your glance. Hark! methinks I can hear the rustle of the swift wings of a god from heaven.

PISTHETAERUS. Hi! you woman! where are you flying to? Halt, don't stir! keep motionless! not a beat of your wing! — Who are you and from what country? You must say whence you come.

IRIS. I come from the abode of the Olympian gods.

PISTHETAERUS. What's your name, ship or cap?

IRIS. I am swift Iris.

PISTHETAERUS. Paralus or Salaminia?

IRIS. What do you mean?

PISTHETAERUS. Let a buzzard rush at her and seize her.

IRIS. Seize me! But what do all these insults betoken?

PISTHETAERUS. Woe to you!

IRIS. 'Tis incomprehensible.

PISTHETAERUS. By which gate did you pass through the wall, wretched woman?

IRIS. By which gate? Why, great gods, I don't know.

PISTHETAERUS. You hear how she holds us in derision. Did you present yourself to the officers in command of the jays? You don't answer. Have you a permit, bearing the seal of the storks?

IRIS. Am I awake?

PISTHETAERUS. Did you get one?

IRIS. Are you mad?

PISTHETAERUS. No head-bird gave you a safe-conduct?

IRIS. A safe-conduct to me, you poor fool!

PISTHETAERUS. Ah! and so you slipped into this city on the sly and into these realms of air-land that don't belong to you.

IRIS. And what other road can the gods travel?

PISTHETAERUS. By Zeus! I know nothing about that, not I. But they won't pass this way. And you still dare to complain! Iris would ever have more justly suffered death.

IRIS. I am immortal.

PISTHETAERUS. You would have died nevertheless. — Oh! 'twould be truly intolerable! What! should the universe obey us and the gods alone continue their insolence and not understand that they must submit to the law of the strongest in their due turn? But tell me, where are you flying to?

IRIS. I? The messenger of Zeus to mankind, I am going to tell them to sacrifice sheep and oxen on the altars and to fill their streets with the rich smoke of burning fat.

PISTHETAERUS. Of which gods are you speaking?

IRIS. Of which? Why, of ourselves, the gods of heaven.

PISTHETAERUS. You, gods?

IRIS. Are there others then?

PISTHETAERUS. Men now adore the birds as gods, and 'tis to them, by Zeus, that they must offer sacrifices, and not to Zeus at all!

IRIS. Oh! fool! fool! Rouse not the wrath of the gods, for 'tis terrible indeed. Armed with the brand of Zeus, Justice would annihilate your race; the lightning would strike you as it did Lycimnius and consume both your body and the porticos of your palace.

PISTHETAERUS. Here! that's enough tall talk. Just you listen and keep quiet! Do you take me for a Lydian or a Phrygian and think to frighten me with your big words? Know, that if Zeus worries me again, I shall go at the head of my eagles, who are armed with lightning, and reduce his dwelling and that of Amphion to cinders. I shall send more than six hundred porphyrions clothed in leopards' skins up to heaven against him; and formerly a single Porphyrion gave him enough to do. As for you, his messenger, if you annoy me, I shall begin by stretching your legs asunder and so conduct myself, Iris though you be, that despite my age, you will be astonished. I will show you a fine long tool that will fuck you three times over.

IRIS. May you perish, you wretch, you and your infamous words!

PISTHETAERUS. Won't you be off quickly? Come, stretch your wings or look out for squalls!

IRIS. If my father does not punish you for your insults….

PISTHETAERUS. Ha!… but just you be off elsewhere to roast younger folk than us with your lightning.

CHORUS. We forbid the gods, the sons of Zeus, to pass through our city and the mortals to send them the smoke of their sacrifices by this road.

PISTHETAERUS. 'Tis odd that the messenger we sent to the mortals has never returned.

HERALD. Oh! blessed Pisthetaerus, very wise, very illustrious, very gracious, thrice happy, very…. Come, prompt me, somebody, do.

PISTHETAERUS. Get to your story!

HERALD. All peoples are filled with admiration for your wisdom, and they award you this golden crown.

PISTHETAERUS. I accept it. But tell me, why do the people admire me?

HERALD. Oh you, who have founded so illustrious a city in the air, you know not in what esteem men hold you and how many there are who burn with desire to dwell in it. Before your city was built, all men had a mania for Sparta; long hair and fasting were held in honour, men went dirty like Socrates and carried staves. Now all is changed. Firstly, as soon as 'tis dawn, they all spring out of bed together to go and seek their food, the same as you do; then they fly off towards the notices and finally devour the decrees. The bird-madness is so clear, that many actually bear the names of birds. There is a halting victualler, who styles himself the partridge; Menippus calls himself the swallow; Opontius the one-eyed crow; Philocles the lark; Theogenes the fox-goose; Lycurgus the ibis; Chaerephon the bat; Syracosius the magpie; Midias the quail; indeed he looks like a quail that has been hit heavily over the head. Out of love for the birds they repeat all the songs which concern the swallow, the teal, the goose or the pigeon; in each verse you see wings, or at all events a few feathers. This is what is happening down there. Finally, there are more than ten thousand folk who are coming here from earth to ask you for feathers and hooked claws; so, mind you supply yourself with wings for the immigrants.

PISTHETAERUS. Ah! by Zeus, 'tis not the time for idling. Go as quick as possible and fill every hamper, every basket you can find with wings. Manes will bring them to me outside the walls, where I will welcome those who present themselves.

CHORUS. This town will soon be inhabited by a crowd of men.

PISTHETAERUS. If fortune favours us.

CHORUS. Folk are more and more delighted with it.

PISTHETAERUS. Come, hurry up and bring them along.

CHORUS. Will not man find here everything that can please him — wisdom, love, the divine Graces, the sweet face of gentle peace?

PISTHETAERUS. Oh! you lazy servant! won't you hurry yourself?

CHORUS. Let a basket of wings be brought speedily. Come, beat him as I do, and put some life into him; he is as lazy as an ass.

PISTHETAERUS. Aye, Manes is a great craven.

CHORUS. Begin by putting this heap of wings in order; divide them in three parts according to the birds from whom they came; the singing, the prophetic and the aquatic birds; then you must take care to distribute them to the men according to their character.

PISTHETAERUS *(to Manes)*. Oh! by the kestrels! I can keep my hands off you no longer; you are too slow and lazy altogether.

A PARRICIDE. Oh! might I but become an eagle, who soars in the skies! Oh! might I fly above the azure waves of the barren sea!

PISTHETAERUS. Ha! 'twould seem the news was true; I hear someone coming who talks of wings.

PARRICIDE. Nothing is more charming than to fly; I burn with desire to live under the same laws as the birds; I am bird-mad and fly towards you, for I want to live with you and to obey your laws.

PISTHETAERUS. Which laws? The birds have many laws.

PARRICIDE. All of them; but the one that pleases me most is, that among the birds it is considered a fine thing to peck and strangle one's father.

PISTHETAERUS. Aye, by Zeus! according to us, he who dares to strike his father, while still a chick, is a brave fellow.

PARRICIDE. And therefore I want to dwell here, for I want to strangle my father and inherit his wealth.

PISTHETAERUS. But we have also an ancient law written in the code of the

storks, which runs thus, “When the stork father has reared his young and has taught them to fly, the young must in their turn support the father.”

PARRICIDE. ’Tis hardly worth while coming all this distance to be compelled to keep my father!

PISTHETAERUS. No, no, young friend, since you have come to us with such willingness, I am going to give you these black wings, as though you were an orphan bird; furthermore, some good advice, that I received myself in infancy. Don’t strike your father, but take these wings in one hand and these spurs in the other; imagine you have a cock’s crest on your head and go and mount guard and fight; live on your pay and respect your father’s life. You’re a gallant fellow! Very well, then! Fly to Thrace and fight.

PARRICIDE. By Bacchus! ’Tis well spoken; I will follow your counsel.

PISTHETAERUS. ’Tis acting wisely, by Zeus.

CINESIAS. “On my light pinions I soar off to Olympus; in its capricious flight my Muse flutters along the thousand paths of poetry in turn …”

PISTHETAERUS. This is a fellow will need a whole shipload of wings.

CINESIAS. … it is seeking fresh outlet.”

PISTHETAERUS. Welcome, Cinesias, you lime-wood man! Why have you come here a-twisting your game leg in circles?

CINESIAS. “I want to become a bird, a tuneful nightingale.”

PISTHETAERUS. Enough of that sort of ditty. Tell me what you want.

CINESIAS. Give me wings and I will fly into the topmost airs to gather fresh songs in the clouds, in the midst of the vapours and the fleecy snow.

PISTHETAERUS. Gather songs in the clouds?

CINESIAS. ’Tis on them the whole of our latter-day art depends. The most brilliant dithyrambs are those that flap their wings in void space and are clothed in mist and dense obscurity. To appreciate this, just listen.

PISTHETAERUS. Oh! no, no, no!

CINESIAS. By Hermes! but indeed you shall. “I shall travel through thine ethereal empire like a winged bird, who cleaveth space with his long neck….”

PISTHETAERUS. Stop! easy all, I say!

CINESIAS. … as I soar over the seas, carried by the breath of the winds …

PISTHETAERUS. By Zeus! but I’ll cut your breath short.

CINESIAS. … now rushing along the tracks of Notus, now nearing Boreas across the infinite wastes of the ether.” *(Pisthetaerus beats him.)* Ah! old man, that’s a pretty and clever idea truly!

PISTHETAERUS. What! are you not delighted to be cleaving the air?

CINESIAS. To treat a dithyrambic poet, for whom the tribes dispute with each other, in this style!

PISTHETAERUS. Will you stay with us and form a chorus of winged birds as slender as Leotrophides for the Cecropid tribe?

CINESIAS. You are making game of me, ’tis clear; but know that I shall never leave you in peace if I do not have wings wherewith to traverse the air.

AN INFORMER. What are these birds with downy feathers, who look so pitiable to me? Tell me, oh swallow with the long dappled wings.

PISTHETAERUS. Oh! but ’tis a perfect invasion that threatens us. Here comes another of them, humming along.

INFORMER. Swallow with the long dappled wings, once more I summon you.

PISTHETAERUS. It’s his cloak I believe he’s addressing; ‘faith, it stands in great need of the swallows’ return.

INFORMER. Where is he who gives out wings to all comers?

PISTHETAERUS. ’Tis I, but you must tell me for what purpose you want them.

INFORMER. Ask no questions. I want wings, and wings I must have.

PISTHETAERUS. Do you want to fly straight to Pellené?

INFORMER. I? Why, I am an accuser of the islands, an informer …

PISTHETAERUS. A fine trade, truly!

INFORMER. … a hatcher of lawsuits. Hence I have great need of wings to prowl round the cities and drag them before justice.

PISTHETAERUS. Would you do this better if you had wings?

INFORMER. No, but I should no longer fear the pirates; I should return with the cranes, loaded with a supply of lawsuits by way of ballast.

PISTHETAERUS. So it seems, despite all your youthful vigour, you make it your trade to denounce strangers?

INFORMER. Well, and why not? I don't know how to dig.

PISTHETAERUS. But, by Zeus! there are honest ways of gaining a living at your age without all this infamous trickery.

INFORMER. My friend, I am asking you for wings, not for words.

PISTHETAERUS. 'Tis just my words that give you wings.

INFORMER. And how can you give a man wings with your words?

PISTHETAERUS. 'Tis thus that all first start.

INFORMER. All?

PISTHETAERUS. Have you not often heard the father say to young men in the barbers' shops, "It's astonishing how Diitrephes' advice has made my son fly to horse-riding."— "Mine," says another, "has flown towards tragic poetry on the wings of his imagination."

INFORMER. So that words give wings?

PISTHETAERUS. Undoubtedly; words give wings to the mind and make a man soar to heaven. Thus I hope that my wise words will give you wings to fly to some less degrading trade.

INFORMER. But I do not want to.

PISTHETAERUS. What do you reckon on doing then?

INFORMER. I won't belie my breeding; from generation to generation we have lived by informing. Quick, therefore, give me quickly some light, swift hawk or kestrel wings, so that I may summon the islanders, sustain the accusation here, and haste back there again on flying pinions.

PISTHETAERUS. I see. In this way the stranger will be condemned even before he appears.

INFORMER. That's just it.

PISTHETAERUS. And while he is on his way here by sea, you will be flying to the islands to despoil him of his property.

INFORMER. You've hit it, precisely; I must whirl hither and thither like a perfect humming-top.

PISTHETAERUS. I catch the idea. Wait, i' faith, I've got some fine
Corcyraean wings. How do you like them?

INFORMER. Oh! woe is me! Why, 'tis a whip!

PISTHETAERUS. No, no; these are the wings, I tell you, that set the top a-spinning.

INFORMER. Oh! oh! oh!

PISTHETAERUS. Take your flight, clear off, you miserable cur, or you will soon see what comes of quibbling and lying. Come, let us gather up our wings and withdraw.

CHORUS. In my ethereal nights I have seen many things new and strange and wondrous beyond belief. There is a tree called Cleonymus belonging to an

unknown species; it has no heart, is good for nothing and is as tall as it is cowardly. In springtime it shoots forth calumnies instead of buds and in autumn it strews the ground with bucklers in place of leaves.

Far away in the regions of darkness, where no ray of light ever enters, there is a country, where men sit at the table of the heroes and dwell with them always — save always in the evening. Should any mortal meet the hero Orestes at night, he would soon be stripped and covered with blows from head to foot.

PROMETHEUS. Ah! by the gods! if only Zeus does not espy me! Where is Pisthetaerus?

PISTHETAERUS. Ha! what is this? A masked man!

PROMETHEUS. Can you see any god behind me?

PISTHETAERUS. No, none. But who are you, pray?

PROMETHEUS. What's the time, please?

PISTHETAERUS. The time? Why, it's past noon. Who are you?

PROMETHEUS. Is it the fall of day? Is it no later than that?

PISTHETAERUS. Oh! 'pon my word! but you grow tiresome!

PROMETHEUS. What is Zeus doing? Is he dispersing the clouds or gathering them?

PISTHETAERUS. Take care, lest I lose all patience.

PROMETHEUS. Come, I will raise my mask.

PISTHETAERUS. Ah! my dear Prometheus!

PROMETHEUS. Stop! stop! speak lower!

PISTHETAERUS. Why, what's the matter, Prometheus?

PROMETHEUS. H'sh, h'sh! Don't call me by my name; you will be my ruin, if Zeus should see me here. But, if you want me to tell you how things are going in

heaven, take this umbrella and shield me, so that the gods don't see me.

PISTHETAERUS. I can recognize Prometheus in this cunning trick. Come, quick then, and fear nothing; speak on.

PROMETHEUS. Then listen.

PISTHETAERUS. I am listening, proceed!

PROMETHEUS. It's all over with Zeus.

PISTHETAERUS. Ah! and since when, pray?

PROMETHEUS. Since you founded this city in the air. There is not a man who now sacrifices to the gods; the smoke of the victims no longer reaches us. Not the smallest offering comes! We fast as though it were the festival of Demeter. The barbarian gods, who are dying of hunger, are bawling like Illyrians and threaten to make an armed descent upon Zeus, if he does not open markets where joints of the victims are sold.

PISTHETAERUS. What! there are other gods besides you, barbarian gods who dwell above Olympus?

PROMETHEUS. If there were no barbarian gods, who would be the patron of Execestides?

PISTHETAERUS. And what is the name of these gods?

PROMETHEUS. Their name? Why, the Triballi.

PISTHETAERUS. Ah, indeed! 'tis from that no doubt that we derive the word 'tribulation.'

PROMETHEUS. Most likely. But one thing I can tell you for certain, namely, that Zeus and the celestial Triballi are going to send deputies here to sue for peace. Now don't you treat, unless Zeus restores the sceptre to the birds and gives you Basileia in marriage.

PISTHETAERUS. Who is this Basileia?

PROMETHEUS. A very fine young damsel, who makes the lightning for Zeus; all things come from her, wisdom, good laws, virtue, the fleet, calumnies, the public paymaster and the triobolus.

PISTHETAERUS. Ah! then she is a sort of general manageress to the god.

PROMETHEUS. Yes, precisely. If he gives you her for your wife, yours will be the almighty power. That is what I have come to tell you; for you know my constant and habitual goodwill towards men.

PISTHETAERUS. Oh, yes! 'tis thanks to you that we roast our meat.

PROMETHEUS. I hate the gods, as you know.

PISTHETAERUS. Aye, by Zeus, you have always detested them.

PROMETHEUS. Towards them I am a veritable Timon; but I must return in all haste, so give me the umbrella; if Zeus should see me from up there, he would think I was escorting one of the Canephori.

PISTHETAERUS. Wait, take this stool as well.

CHORUS. Near by the land of the Sciapodes there is a marsh, from the borders whereof the odious Socrates evokes the souls of men. Pisander came one day to see his soul, which he had left there when still alive. He offered a little victim, a camel, slit his throat and, following the example of Ulysses, stepped one pace backwards. Then that bat of a Chaerephon came up from hell to drink the camel's blood.

POSIDON. This is the city of Nephelococcygia, Cloud-cuckoo-town, whither we come as ambassadors. *(To Triballus.)* Hi! what are you up to? you are throwing your cloak over the left shoulder. Come, fling it quick over the right! And why, pray, does it draggle this fashion? Have you ulcers to hide like Laespodias? Oh! democracy! whither, oh! whither are you leading us? Is it possible that the gods have chosen such an envoy?

TRIBALLUS. Leave me alone.

POSIDON. Ugh! the cursed savage! you are by far the most barbarous of all the gods. — Tell me, Heracles, what are we going to do?

HERACLES. I have already told you that I want to strangle the fellow who has dared to block us in.

POSIDON. But, my friend, we are envoys of peace.

HERACLES. All the more reason why I wish to strangle him.

PISTHETAERUS. Hand me the cheese-grater; bring me the silphium for sauce; pass me the cheese and watch the coals.

HERACLES. Mortal! we who greet you are three gods.

PISTHETAERUS. Wait a bit till I have prepared my silphium pickle.

HERACLES. What are these meats?

PISTHETAERUS. These are birds that have been punished with death for attacking the people's friends.

HERACLES. And you are seasoning them before answering us?

PISTHETAERUS. Ah! Heracles! welcome, welcome! What's the matter?

HERACLES. The gods have sent us here as ambassadors to treat for peace.

A SERVANT. There's no more oil in the flask.

PISTHETAERUS. And yet the birds must be thoroughly basted with it.

HERACLES. We have no interest to serve in fighting you; as for you, be friends and we promise that you shall always have rain-water in your pools and the warmest of warm weather. So far as these points go we are armed with plenary authority.

PISTHETAERUS. We have never been the aggressors, and even now we are as well disposed for peace as yourselves, provided you agree to one equitable condition, namely, that Zeus yield his sceptre to the birds. If only this is agreed to, I invite the ambassadors to dinner.

HERACLES. That's good enough for me. I vote for peace.

POSIDON. You wretch! you are nothing but a fool and a glutton. Do you want to dethrone your own father?

PISTHETAERUS. What an error! Why, the gods will be much more powerful if the birds govern the earth. At present the mortals are hidden beneath the clouds, escape your observation, and commit perjury in your name; but if you had the birds for your allies, and a man, after having sworn by the crow and Zeus, should fail to keep his oath, the crow would dive down upon him unawares and pluck out his eye.

POSIDON. Well thought of, by Posidon!

HERACLES. My notion too.

PISTHETAERUS. *(to the Triballian)*. And you, what's your opinion?

TRIBALLUS. Nabaisatreu.

PISTHETAERUS. D'you see? he also approves. But hear another thing in which we can serve you. If a man vows to offer a sacrifice to some god and then procrastinates, pretending that the gods can wait, and thus does not keep his word, we shall punish his stinginess.

POSIDON. Ah! ah! and how?

PISTHETAERUS. While he is counting his money or is in the bath, a kite will relieve him, before he knows it, either in coin or in clothes, of the value of a couple of sheep, and carry it to the god.

HERACLES. I vote for restoring them the sceptre.

POSIDON. Ask the Triballian.

HERACLES. Hi! Triballian, do you want a thrashing?

TRIBALLUS. Saunaka baktarikrousa.

HERACLES. He says, "Right willingly."

POSIDON. If that be the opinion of both of you, why, I consent too.

HERACLES. Very well! we accord the sceptre.

PISTHETAERUS. Ah! I was nearly forgetting another condition. I will leave Heré to Zeus, but only if the young Basileia is given me in marriage.

POSIDON. Then you don't want peace. Let us withdraw.

PISTHETAERUS. It matters mighty little to me. Cook, look to the gravy.

HERACLES. What an odd fellow this Posidon is! Where are you off to? Are we going to war about a woman?

POSIDON. What else is there to do?

HERACLES. What else? Why, conclude peace.

POSIDON. Oh! the ninny! do you always want to be fooled? Why, you are seeking your own downfall. If Zeus were to die, after having yielded them the sovereignty, you would be ruined, for you are the heir of all the wealth he will leave behind.

PISTHETAERUS. Oh! by the gods! how he is cajoling you. Step aside, that I may have a word with you. Your uncle is getting the better of you, my poor friend. The law will not allow you an obolus of the paternal property, for you are a bastard and not a legitimate child.

HERACLES. I a bastard! What's that you tell me?

PISTHETAERUS. Why, certainly; are you not born of a stranger woman? Besides, is not Athené recognized as Zeus' sole heiress? And no daughter would be that, if she had a legitimate brother.

HERACLES. But what if my father wished to give me his property on his death-bed, even though I be a bastard?

PISTHETAERUS. The law forbids it, and this same Posidon would be the first to lay claim to his wealth, in virtue of being his legitimate brother. Listen; thus runs Solon's law: "A bastard shall not inherit, if there are legitimate children; and if there are no legitimate children, the property shall pass to the nearest kin."

HERACLES. And I get nothing whatever of the paternal property?

PISTHETAERUS. Absolutely nothing. But tell me, has your father had you entered on the registers of his phratria?

HERACLES. No, and I have long been surprised at the omission.

PISTHETAERUS. What ails you, that you should shake your fist at heaven? Do you want to fight it? Why, be on my side, I will make you a king and will feed you on bird's milk and honey.

HERACLES. Your further condition seems fair to me. I cede you the young damsel.

POSIDON. But I, I vote against this opinion.

PISTHETAERUS. Then all depends on the Triballian. *(To the Triballian.)*
What do you say?

TRIBALLUS. Big bird give daughter pretty and queen.

HERACLES. You say that you give her?

POSIDON. Why no, he does not say anything of the sort, that he gives her; else I cannot understand any better than the swallows.

PISTHETAERUS. Exactly so. Does he not say she must be given to the swallows?

POSIDON. Very well! you two arrange the matter; make peace, since you wish it so; I'll hold my tongue.

HERACLES. We are of a mind to grant you all that you ask. But come up there with us to receive Basileia and the celestial bounty.

PISTHETAERUS. Here are birds already cut up, and very suitable for a nuptial feast.

HERACLES. You go and, if you like, I will stay here to roast them.

PISTHETAERUS. You to roast them! you are too much the glutton; come along

with us.

HERACLES. Ah! how well I would have treated myself!

PISTHETAERUS. Let some bring me a beautiful and magnificent tunic for the wedding.

CHORUS. At Phanae, near the Clepsydra, there dwells a people who have neither faith nor law, the Englottogastors, who reap, sow, pluck the vines and the figs with their tongues; they belong to a barbaric race, and among them the Philippi and the Gorgiases are to be found; 'tis these Englottogastorian Phillippi who introduced the custom all over Attica of cutting out the tongue separately at sacrifices.

A MESSENGER. Oh, you, whose unbounded happiness I cannot express in words, thrice happy race of airy birds, receive your king in your fortunate dwellings. More brilliant than the brightest star that illumes the earth, he is approaching his glittering golden palace; the sun itself does not shine with more dazzling glory. He is entering with his bride at his side whose beauty no human tongue can express; in his hand he brandishes the lightning, the winged shaft of Zeus; perfumes of unspeakable sweetness pervade the ethereal realms. 'Tis a glorious spectacle to see the clouds of incense wafting in light whirlwinds before the breath of the Zephyr! But here he is himself. Divine Muse! let thy sacred lips begin with songs of happy omen.

CHORUS. Fall back! to the right! to the left! advance! Fly around this happy mortal, whom Fortune loads with her blessings. Oh! oh! what grace! what beauty! Oh, marriage so auspicious for our city! All honour to this man! 'tis through him that the birds are called to such glorious destinies. Let your nuptial hymns, your nuptial songs, greet him and his Basileia! 'Twas in the midst of such festivities that the Fates formerly united Olympian Here to the King who governs the gods from the summit of his inaccessible throne. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus! Rosy Eros with the golden wings held the reins and guided the chariot; 'twas he, who presided over the union of Zeus and the fortunate Heré. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

PISTHETAERUS. I am delighted with your songs, I applaud your verses. Now celebrate the thunder that shakes the earth, the flaming lightning of Zeus and the terrible flashing thunderbolt.

CHORUS. Oh, thou golden flash of the lightning! oh, ye divine shafts of flame, that Zeus has hitherto shot forth! Oh, ye rolling thunders, that bring down the rain! 'Tis by the order of our king that ye shall now stagger the earth! Oh, Hymen! 'tis through thee that he commands the universe and that he makes Basileia, whom he has robbed from Zeus, take her seat at his side. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

PISTHETAERUS. Let all the winged tribes of our fellow-citizens follow the bridal couple to the palace of Zeus and to the nuptial couch! Stretch forth your hands, my dear wife! Take hold of me by my wings and let us dance; I am going to lift you up and carry you through the air.

CHORUS. Oh, joy! Io Paean! Tralala! victory is thine, oh, thou greatest of the gods!

LYSISTRATA

Anonymous translation for the Athenian Society, London, 1912

Originally performed in Athens in 411 BC, this comedy presents an Athenian woman's remarkable mission to end The Peloponnesian War, by persuading the women of Greece to withhold sexual privileges from their husbands and lovers as a means of forcing the men to negotiate peace. The play is notable for its early representation of sexual relations in a male-dominated society and is of paramount importance in understanding the relationships between men and women in ancient Athens. *Lysistrata* was produced in the same year as *The Women Celebrating the Thesmophoria*, another comedy with a focus on gender issues, two years after Athens' catastrophic defeat in the Sicilian Expedition.

Aristophanes demonstrates an unusually modern empathy with the female condition, at a time when dramatic poets in Athens still reinforced sexual stereotyping of women as irrational creatures in need of protection from themselves and from others. In the drama, Lysistrata rejects the men's conduct of the war as she feels there are no real men in Athens that could bring an end to the destruction and waste of lives. She must protect women from their own worst instincts before she can accomplish her primary mission to end the war, so she has to persuade them to forgo sexual activity, even binding them with an oath and later she must rally them with an oracle when they show signs of wavering. She is presented by the playwright as an exceptional woman and by the end of the play she demonstrates her mastery over the men, even the leaders, too.

Greek vase depiction of women preparing wool, c. 300BC

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Monash University's Graduate Theatre Ensemble's 2009 production of 'Lysistrata'

INTRODUCTION

The ‘Lysistrata,’ the third and concluding play of the War and Peace series, was not produced till ten years later than its predecessor, the ‘Peace,’ *viz.* in 411 B.C. It is now the twenty-first year of the War, and there seems as little prospect of peace as ever. A desperate state of things demands a desperate remedy, and the Poet proceeds to suggest a burlesque solution of the difficulty.

The women of Athens, led by Lysistrata and supported by female delegates from the other states of Hellas, determine to take matters into their own hands and force the men to stop the War. They meet in solemn conclave, and Lysistrata expounds her scheme, the rigorous application to husbands and lovers of a self-denying ordinance— “we must refrain from the male organ altogether.” Every wife and mistress is to refuse all sexual favours whatsoever, till the men have come to terms of peace. In cases where the women *must* yield ‘par force majeure,’ then it is to be with an ill grace and in such a way as to afford the minimum of gratification to their partner; they are to lie passive and take no more part in the amorous game than they are absolutely obliged to. By these means Lysistrata assures them they will very soon gain their end. “If we sit indoors prettily dressed out in our best transparent silks and prettiest gewgaws, and with our ‘mottes’ all nicely depilated, their tools will stand up so stiff that they will be able to deny us nothing.” Such is the burden of her advice.

After no little demur, this plan of campaign is adopted, and the assembled women take a solemn oath to observe the compact faithfully. Meantime as a precautionary measure they seize the Acropolis, where the State treasure is kept; the old men of the city assault the doors, but are repulsed by “the terrible regiment” of women. Before long the device of the bold Lysistrata proves entirely effective, Peace is concluded, and the play ends with the hilarious festivities of the Athenian and Spartan plenipotentiaries in celebration of the event.

This drama has a double Chorus — of women and of old men, and much excellent fooling is got out of the fight for possession of the citadel between the two hostile bands; while the broad jokes and decidedly suggestive situations arising out of the general idea of the plot outlined above may be “better imagined than described.”

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LYSISTRATA.
CALONICÉ. MYRRHINÉ.
LAMPITO.
STRATYLLIS.
A MAGISTRATE.
CINESIAS.
A CHILD.
HERALD OF THE LACEDAEMONIANS.
ENVOYS OF THE LACEDAEMONIANS.
POLYCHARIDES.
MARKET LOUNGERS.
A SERVANT.
AN ATHENIAN CITIZEN.
CHORUS OF OLD MEN.
CHORUS OF WOMEN.

SCENE: In a public square at Athens; afterwards before the gates of the Acropolis, and finally within the precincts of the citadel.

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA *(alone)*. Ah! if only they had been invited to a Bacchic revelling, or a feast of Pan or Aphrodité or Genetyllis, why! the streets would have been impassable for the thronging tambourines! Now there's never a woman here-ah! except my neighbour Calonicé, whom I see approaching yonder…. Good day, Calonicé.

CALONICÉ. Good day, Lysistrata; but pray, why this dark, forbidding face, my dear? Believe me, you don't look a bit pretty with those black lowering brows.

LYSISTRATA. Oh! Calonicé, my heart is on fire; I blush for our sex. Men *will* have it we are tricky and sly….

CALONICÉ. And they are quite right, upon my word!

LYSISTRATA. Yet, look you, when the women are summoned to meet for a matter of the last importance, they lie abed instead of coming.

CALONICÉ. Oh! they will come, my dear; but 'tis not easy, you know, for women to leave the house. One is busy pottering about her husband; another is getting the servant up; a third is putting her child asleep, or washing the brat or feeding it.

LYSISTRATA. But I tell you, the business that calls them here is far and away more urgent.

CALONICÉ. And why *do* you summon us, dear Lysistrata? What is it all about?

LYSISTRATA. About a big affair.

CALONICÉ. And is it thick too?

LYSISTRATA. Yes indeed, both big and great.

CALONICÉ. And we are not all on the spot!

LYSISTRATA. Oh! if it were what you suppose, there would be never an absentee. No, no, it concerns a thing I have turned about and about this way and

that of many sleepless nights.

CALONICÉ. It must be something mighty fine and subtle for you to have turned it about so!

LYSISTRATA. So fine, it means just this, Greece saved by the women!

CALONICÉ. By women! Why, its salvation hangs on a poor thread then!

LYSISTRATA. Our country's fortunes depend on us — it is with us to undo utterly the Peloponnesians….

CALONICÉ. That would be a noble deed truly!

LYSISTRATA. To exterminate the Boeotians to a man!

CALONICÉ. But surely you would spare the eels.

LYSISTRATA. For Athens' sake I will never threaten so fell a doom; trust me for that. However, if the Boeotian and Peloponnesian women join us, Greece is saved.

CALONICÉ. But how should women perform so wise and glorious an achievement, we women who dwell in the retirement of the household, clad in diaphanous garments of yellow silk and long flowing gowns, decked out with flowers and shod with dainty little slippers?

LYSISTRATA. Nay, but those are the very sheet-anchors of our salvation — those yellow tunics, those scents and slippers, those cosmetics and transparent robes.

CALONICÉ. How so, pray?

LYSISTRATA. There is not a man will wield a lance against another …

CALONICÉ. Quick, I will get me a yellow tunic from the dyer's.

LYSISTRATA. … or want a shield.

CALONICÉ. I'll run and put on a flowing gown.

LYSISTRATA. … or draw a sword.

CALONICÉ. I'll haste and buy a pair of slippers this instant.

LYSISTRATA. Now tell me, would not the women have done best to come?

CALONICÉ. Why, they should have *flown* here!

LYSISTRATA. Ah! my dear, you'll see that like true Athenians, they will do everything too late…. Why, there's not a woman come from the shoreward parts, not one from Salamis.

CALONICÉ. But I know for certain they embarked at daybreak.

LYSISTRATA. And the dames from Acharnae! why, I thought they would have been the very first to arrive.

CALONICÉ. Theagenes wife at any rate is sure to come; she has actually been to consult Hecaté…. But look! here are some arrivals — and there are more behind. Ah! ha! now what countrywomen may they be?

LYSISTRATA. They are from Anagyra.

CALONICÉ. Yes! upon my word, 'tis a levy *en masse* of all the female population of Anagyra!

MYRRHINÉ. Are we late, Lysistrata? Tell us, pray; what, not a word?

LYSISTRATA. I cannot say much for you, Myrrhiné! you have not bestirred yourself overmuch for an affair of such urgency.

MYRRHINÉ I could not find my girdle in the dark. However, if the matter is so pressing, here we are; so speak.

LYSISTRATA. No, but let us wait a moment more, till the women of Boeotia arrive and those from the Peloponnese.

MYRRHINÉ Yes, that is best…. Ah! here comes Lampito.

LYSISTRATA. Good day, Lampito, dear friend from Lacedaemon. How well and handsome you look! what a rosy complexion! and how strong you seem;

why, you could strangle a bull surely!

LAMPITO. Yes, indeed, I really think I could. ’Tis because I do gymnastics and practise the kick dance.

LYSISTRATA. And what superb bosoms!

LAMPITO. La! you are feeling me as if I were a beast for sacrifice.

LYSISTRATA. And this young woman, what countrywoman is she?

LAMPITO. She is a noble lady from Boeotia.

LYSISTRATA. Ah! my pretty Boeotian friend, you are as blooming as a garden.

CALONICÉ. Yes, on my word! and the garden is so prettily weeded too!

LYSISTRATA. And who is this?

LAMPITO. ’Tis an honest woman, by my faith! she comes from Corinth.

LYSISTRATA. Oh! honest, no doubt then — as honesty goes at Corinth.

LAMPITO. But who has called together this council of women, pray?

LYSISTRATA. I have.

LAMPITO. Well then, tell us what you want of us.

LYSISTRATA. With pleasure, my dear.

MYRRHINÉ. What is the most important business you wish to inform us about?

LYSISTRATA. I will tell you. But first answer me one question.

MYRRHINÉ. What is that?

LYSISTRATA. Don’t you feel sad and sorry because the fathers of your children are far away from you with the army? For I’ll undertake, there is not one of you whose husband is not abroad at this moment.

CALONICÉ. Mine has been the last five months in Thrace — looking after

CALONICE. Mine has been the last five months in Thrace — looking after Eucrates.

LYSISTRATA. ’Tis seven long months since mine left me for Pylos.

LAMPITO. As for mine, if he ever does return from service, he’s no sooner back than he takes down his shield again and flies back to the wars.

LYSISTRATA. And not so much as the shadow of a lover! Since the day the Milesians betrayed us, I have never once seen an eight-inch-long *godemiche* even, to be a leathern consolation to us poor widows…. Now tell me, if I have discovered a means of ending the war, will you all second me?

MYRRHINÉ. Yes verily, by all the goddesses, I swear I will, though I have to put my gown in pawn, and drink the money the same day.

CALONICÉ. And so will I, though I must be split in two like a flat-fish, and have half myself removed.

LAMPITO. And I too; why, to secure Peace, I would climb to the top of Mount Taygetus.

LYSISTRATA. Then I will out with it at last, my mighty secret! Oh! sister women, if we would compel our husbands to make peace, we must refrain….

MYRRHINÉ. Refrain from what? tell us, tell us!

LYSISTRATA. But will you do it?

MYRRHINÉ. We will, we will, though we should die of it.

LYSISTRATA. We must refrain from the male organ altogether…. Nay, why do you turn your backs on me? Where are you going? So, you bite your lips, and shake your heads, eh? Why these pale, sad looks? why these tears? Come, will you do it — yes or no? Do you hesitate?

MYRRHINÉ. No, I will not do it; let the War go on.

LYSISTRATA. And you, my pretty flat-fish, who declared just now they might split you in two?

CALONICÉ. Anything, anything but that! Bid me go through the fire, if you will; but to rob us of the sweetest thing in all the world, my dear, dear Lysistrata!

LYSISTRATA. And you?

MYRRHINÉ. Yes, I agree with the others; I too would sooner go through the fire.

LYSISTRATA. Oh, wanton, vicious sex! the poets have done well to make tragedies upon us; we are good for nothing then but love and lewdness! But you, my dear, you from hardy Sparta, if *you* join me, all may yet be well; help me, second me, I conjure you.

LAMPITO. 'Tis a hard thing, by the two goddesses it is! for a woman to sleep alone without ever a standing weapon in her bed. But there, Peace must come first.

LYSISTRATA. Oh, my dear, my dearest, best friend, you are the only one deserving the name of woman!

CALONICÉ. But if — which the gods forbid — we do refrain altogether from what you say, should we get peace any sooner?

LYSISTRATA. Of course we should, by the goddesses twain! We need only sit indoors with painted cheeks, and meet our mates lightly clad in transparent gowns of Amorgos silk, and with our "mottes" nicely plucked smooth; then their tools will stand like mad and they will be wild to lie with us. That will be the time to refuse, and they will hasten to make peace, I am convinced of that!

LAMPITO. Yes, just as Menelaus, when he saw Helen's naked bosom, threw away his sword, they say.

CALONICÉ. But, poor devils, suppose our husbands go away and leave us.

LYSISTRATA. Then, as Pherecrates says, we must "flay a skinned dog," that's all.

CALONICÉ. Bah! these proverbs are all idle talk…. But if our husbands drag us by main force into the bedchamber?

LYSISTRATA. Hold on to the door posts.

CALONICÉ. But if they beat us?

LYSISTRATA. Then yield to their wishes, but with a bad grace; there is no pleasure for them, when they do it by force. Besides, there are a thousand ways of tormenting them. Never fear, they'll soon tire of the game; there's no satisfaction for a man, unless the woman shares it.

CALONICÉ. Very well, if you *will* have it so, we agree.

LAMPITO. For ourselves, no doubt we shall persuade our husbands to conclude a fair and honest peace; but there is the Athenian populace, how are we to cure these folk of their warlike frenzy?

LYSISTRATA. Have no fear; we undertake to make our own people hear reason.

LAMPITO. Nay, impossible, so long as they have their trusty ships and the vast treasures stored in the temple of Athené.

LYSISTRATA. Ah! but we have seen to that; this very day the Acropolis will be in our hands. That is the task assigned to the older women; while we are here in council, they are going, under pretence of offering sacrifice, to seize the citadel.

LAMPITO. Well said indeed! so everything is going for the best.

LYSISTRATA. Come, quick, Lampito, and let us bind ourselves by an inviolable oath.

LAMPITO. Recite the terms; we will swear to them.

LYSISTRATA. With pleasure. Where is our Usheress? Now, what are you staring at, pray? Lay this shield on the earth before us, its hollow upwards, and someone bring me the victim's inwards.

CALONICÉ. Lysistrata, say, what oath are we to swear?

LYSISTRATA. What oath? Why, in Aeschylus, they sacrifice a sheep, and swear over a buckler; we will do the same.

CALONICÉ. No, Lysistrata, one cannot swear peace over a buckler, surely.

LYSISTRATA. What other oath do you prefer?

CALONICÉ. Let's take a white horse, and sacrifice it, and swear on its entrails.

LYSISTRATA. But where get a white horse from?

CALONICÉ. Well, what oath shall we take then?

LYSISTRATA. Listen to me. Let's set a great black bowl on the ground; let's sacrifice a skin of Thasian wine into it, and take oath not to add one single drop of water.

LAMPITO. Ah! that's an oath pleases me more than I can say.

LYSISTRATA. Let them bring me a bowl and a skin of wine.

CALONICÉ. Ah! my dears, what a noble big bowl! what a delight 'twill be to empty it!

LYSISTRATA. Set the bowl down on the ground, and lay your hands on the victim…. Almighty goddess, Persuasion, and thou, bowl, boon comrade of joy and merriment, receive this our sacrifice, and be propitious to us poor women!

CALONICÉ. Oh! the fine red blood! how well it flows!

LAMPITO. And what a delicious savour, by the goddesses twain!

LYSISTRATA. Now, my dears, let me swear first, if you please.

CALONICÉ. No, by the goddess of love, let us decide that by lot.

LYSISTRATA. Come then, Lampito, and all of you, put your hands to the bowl; and do you, Calonicé, repeat in the name of all the solemn terms I am going to recite. Then you must all swear, and pledge yourselves by the same promises.—"*I will have naught to do whether with lover or husband….*"

CALONICÉ. *I will have naught to do whether with lover or husband….*

LYSISTRATA. *Albeit he come to me with stiff and standing tool….*

CALONICÉ. *Albeit he come to me with stiff and standing tool….* Oh!
Lysistrata, I cannot bear it!

LYSISTRATA. *I will live at home in perfect chastity….*

CALONICÉ. *I will live at home in perfect chastity….*

LYSISTRATA. *Beautifully dressed and wearing a saffron-coloured gown….*

CALONICÉ. *Beautifully dressed and wearing a saffron-coloured gown….*

LYSISTRATA. *To the end I may inspire my husband with the most ardent longings.*

CALONICÉ. *To the end I may inspire my husband with the most ardent longings.*

LYSISTRATA. *Never will I give myself voluntarily….*

CALONICÉ. *Never will I give myself voluntarily….*

LYSISTRATA. *And if he has me by force….*

CALONICÉ. *And if he has me by force….*

LYSISTRATA. *I will be cold as ice, and never stir a limb….*

CALONICÉ. *I will be cold as ice, and never stir a limb….*

LYSISTRATA. *I will not lift my legs in air….*

CALONICÉ. *I will not lift my legs in air….*

LYSISTRATA. *Nor will I crouch with bottom upraised, like carven lions on a knife-handle*.

CALONICÉ. *Nor will I crouch with bottom upraised, like carven lions on a knife-handle*.

LYSISTRATA. *An if I keep my oath, may I be suffered to drink of this wine.*

CALONICÉ. *An if I keep my oath, may I be suffered to drink of this wine*.

LYSISTRATA. *But if I break it, let my bowl be filled with water*.

CALONICÉ. *But if I break it, let my bowl be filled with water*.

LYSISTRATA. Will ye all take this oath?

MYRRHINÉ. Yes, yes!

LYSISTRATA. Then lo! I immolate the victim. *(She drinks.)*

CALONICÉ. Enough, enough, my dear; now let us all drink in turn to cement our friendship.

LAMPITO. Hark! what do those cries mean?

LYSISTRATA. 'Tis what I was telling you; the women have just occupied the Acropolis. So now, Lampito, do you return to Sparta to organize the plot, while your comrades here remain as hostages. For ourselves, let us away to join the rest in the citadel, and let us push the bolts well home.

CALONICÉ. But don't you think the men will march up against us?

LYSISTRATA. I laugh at them. Neither threats nor flames shall force our doors; they shall open only on the conditions I have named.

CALONICÉ. Yes, yes, by the goddess of love! let us keep up our old-time repute for obstinacy and spite.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Go easy, Draces, go easy; why, your shoulder is all chafed by these plaguey heavy olive stocks. But forward still, forward, man, as needs must. What unlooked-for things do happen, to be sure, in a long life! Ah! Strymodorus, who would ever have thought it? Here we have the women, who used, for our misfortune, to eat our bread and live in our houses, daring nowadays to lay hands on the holy image of the goddess, to seize the Acropolis and draw bars and bolts to keep any from entering! Come, Philurgus man, let's hurry thither; let's lay our faggots all about the citadel, and on the blazing pile burn with our hands these vile conspiratresses, one and all — and Lycon's wife, Lysistrata, first and foremost! Nay, by Demeter, never will I let 'em laugh at me,

whiles I have a breath left in my body. Cleomenes himself, the first who ever seized our citadel, had to quit it to his sore dishonour; spite his Lacedaemonian pride, he had to deliver me up his arms and slink off with a single garment to his back. My word! but he was filthy and ragged! and what an unkempt beard, to be sure! He had not had a bath for six long years! Oh! but that was a mighty siege! Our men were ranged seventeen deep before the gate, and never left their posts, even to sleep. These women, these enemies of Euripides and all the gods, shall I do nothing to hinder their inordinate insolence? else let them tear down my trophies of Marathon. But look ye, to finish our toilsome climb, we have only this last steep bit left to mount. Verily 'tis no easy job without beasts of burden, and how these logs do bruise my shoulder! Still let us on, and blow up our fire and see it does not go out just as we reach our destination. Phew! phew! *(blows the fire)*. Oh! dear! what a dreadful smoke! it bites my eyes like a mad dog. It is Lemnos fire for sure, or it would never devour my eyelids like this. Come on, Laches, let's hurry, let's bring succour to the goddess; it's now or never! Phew! phew! *(blows the fire)*. Oh! dear! what a confounded smoke! — There now, there's our fire all bright and burning, thank the gods! Now, why not first put down our loads here, then take a vine-branch, light it at the brazier and hurl it at the gate by way of battering-ram? If they don't answer our summons by pulling back the bolts, then we set fire to the woodwork, and the smoke will choke 'em. Ye gods! what a smoke! Pfaugh! Is there never a Samos general will help me unload my burden? — Ah! it shall not gall my shoulder any more. *(Tosses down his wood.)* Come, brazier, do your duty, make the embers flare, that I may kindle a brand; I want to be the first to hurl one. Aid me, heavenly Victory; let us punish for their insolent audacity the women who have seized our citadel, and may we raise a trophy of triumph for success!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Oh! my dears, methinks I see fire and smoke; can it be a conflagration? Let us hurry all we can. Fly, fly, Nicodicé, ere Calycé and Critylle perish in the fire, or are stifled in the smoke raised by these accursed old men and their pitiless laws. But, great gods, can it be I come too late? Rising at dawn, I had the utmost trouble to fill this vessel at the fountain. Oh! what a crowd there was, and what a din! What a rattling of water-pots! Servants and slave-girls pushed and thronged me! However, here I have it full at last; and I am running to carry the water to my fellow townswomen, whom our foes are plotting to burn alive. News has been brought us that a company of old, doddering greybeards, loaded with enormous faggots, as if they wanted to heat a furnace, have taken the field, vomiting dreadful threats, crying that they must reduce to ashes these horrible women. Suffer them not, oh! goddess, but, of thy

grace, may I see Athens and Greece cured of their warlike folly. 'Tis to this end, oh! thou guardian deity of our city, goddess of the golden crest, that they have seized thy sanctuary. Be their friend and ally, Athené, and if any man hurl against them lighted firebrands, aid us to carry water to extinguish them.

STRATYLLIS. Let me be, I say. Oh! oh! *(She calls for help.)*

CHORUS OF WOMEN. What is this I see, ye wretched old men? Honest and pious folk ye cannot be who act so vilely.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Ah, ha! here's something new! a swarm of women stand posted outside to defend the gates!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Ah! ah! we frighten you, do we; we seem a mighty host, yet you do not see the ten-thousandth part of our sex.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Ho, Phaedrias! shall we stop their cackle? Suppose one of us were to break a stick across their backs, eh?

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Let us set down our water-pots on the ground, to be out of the way, if they should dare to offer us violence.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Let someone knock out two or three teeth for them, as they did to Bupalus; they won't talk so loud then.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Come on then; I wait you with unflinching foot, and I will snap off your testicles like a bitch.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Silence! ere my stick has cut short your days.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Now, just you dare to touch Stratyllis with the tip of your finger!

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. And if I batter you to pieces with my fists, what will you do?

CHORUS OF WOMEN. I will tear out your lungs and entrails with my teeth.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Oh! what a clever poet is Euripides! how well he says that woman is the most shameless of animals.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Let's pick up our water-jars again, Rhodippé.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Ah! accursed harlot, what do you mean to do here with your water?

CHORUS OF WOMEN. And you, old death-in-life, with your fire? Is it to cremate yourself?

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. I am going to build you a pyre to roast your female friends upon.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. And I, — I am going to put out your fire.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. You put out my fire — you!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Yes, you shall soon see.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. I don't know what prevents me from roasting you with this torch.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. I am getting you a bath ready to clean off the filth.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. A bath for me, you dirty slut, you!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Yes, indeed, a nuptial bath — he, he!

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Do you hear that? What insolence!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. I am a free woman, I tell you.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. I will make you hold your tongue, never fear!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Ah, ha! you shall never sit more amongst the heliasts.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Burn off her hair for her!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Water, do your office! *(The women pitch the water in their water-pots over the old men.)* CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Oh, dear! oh, dear! oh, dear!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Was it hot?

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Hot, great gods! Enough, enough!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. I'm watering you, to make you bloom afresh.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Alas! I am too dry! Ah, me! how I am trembling with cold!

MAGISTRATE. These women, have they made din enough, I wonder, with their tambourines? bewept Adonis enough upon their terraces? I was listening to the speeches last assembly day, and Demostratus, whom heaven confound! was saying we must all go over to Sicily — and lo! his wife was dancing round repeating: Alas! alas! Adonis, woe is me for Adonis!

Demostratus was saying we must levy hoplites at Zacynthus — and lo! his wife, more than half drunk, was screaming on the house-roof: "Weep, weep for Adonis!" — while that infamous *Mad Ox* was bellowing away on his side. — Do ye not blush, ye women, for your wild and uproarious doings?

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. But you don't know all their effrontery yet! They abused and insulted us; then soused us with the water in their water-pots, and have set us wringing out our clothes, for all the world as if we had bepissed ourselves.

MAGISTRATE. And 'tis well done too, by Poseidon! We men must share the blame of their ill conduct; it is we who teach them to love riot and dissoluteness and sow the seeds of wickedness in their hearts. You see a husband go into a shop: "Look you, jeweller," says he, "you remember the necklace you made for my wife. Well, t'other evening, when she was dancing, the catch came open. Now, I am bound to start for Salamis; will you make it convenient to go up to-night to make her fastening secure?" Another will go to a cobbler, a great, strong fellow, with a great, long tool, and tell him: "The strap of one of my wife's sandals presses her little toe, which is extremely sensitive; come in about midday to supple the thing and stretch it." Now see the results. Take my own case — as a Magistrate I have enlisted rowers; I want money to pay 'em, and lo! the women clap to the door in my face. But why do we stand here with arms crossed? Bring me a crowbar; I'll chastise their insolence! — Ho! there, my fine fellow! *(addressing one of his attendant officers)* what are you gaping at the crows about? looking for a tavern, I suppose, eh? Come, crowbars here, and force open the gates. I will put a hand to the work myself.

LYSISTRATA. No need to force the gates; I am coming out — here I am. And why bolts and bars? What we want here is not bolts and bars and locks, but common sense.

MAGISTRATE. Really, my fine lady! Where is my officer? I want him to tie that woman's hands behind her back.

LYSISTRATA. By Artemis, the virgin goddess! if he touches me with the tip of his finger, officer of the public peace though he be, let him look out for himself!

MAGISTRATE *(to the officer)*. How now, are you afraid? Seize her, I tell you, round the body. Two of you at her, and have done with it!

FIRST WOMAN. By Pandrosos! if you lay a hand on her, I'll trample you underfoot till you shit your guts!

MAGISTRATE. Oh, there! my guts! Where is my other officer? Bind that minx first, who speaks so prettily!

SECOND WOMAN. By Phoebé, if you touch her with one finger, you'd better call quick for a surgeon!

MAGISTRATE. What do you mean? Officer, where are you got to? Lay hold of her. Oh! but I'm going to stop your foolishness for you all!

THIRD WOMAN. By the Tauric Artemis, if you go near her, I'll pull out your hair, scream as you like.

MAGISTRATE. Ah! miserable man that I am! My own officers desert me. What ho! are we to let ourselves be bested by a mob of women? Ho! Scythians mine, close up your ranks, and forward!

LYSISTRATA. By the holy goddesses! you'll have to make acquaintance with four companies of women, ready for the fray and well armed to boot.

MAGISTRATE. Forward, Scythians, and bind them!

LYSISTRATA. Forward, my gallant companions; march forth, ye vendors of grain and eggs, garlic and vegetables, keepers of taverns and bakeries, wrench and strike and tear; come, a torrent of invective and insult! *(They beat the*

officers.) Enough, enough! now retire, never rob the vanquished!

MAGISTRATE. Here's a fine exploit for my officers!

LYSISTRATA. Ah, ha! so you thought you had only to do with a set of slave-women! you did not know the ardour that fills the bosom of free-born dames.

MAGISTRATE. Ardour! yes, by Apollo, ardour enough — especially for the wine-cup!

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Sir, sir! what use of words? they are of no avail with wild beasts of this sort. Don't you know how they have just washed us down — and with no very fragrant soap!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. What would you have? You should never have laid rash hands on us. If you start afresh, I'll knock your eyes out. My delight is to stay at home as coy as a young maid, without hurting anybody or moving any more than a milestone; but 'ware the wasps, if you go stirring up the wasps' nest!

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Ah! great gods! how get the better of these ferocious creatures? 'tis past all bearing! But come, let us try to find out the reason of the dreadful scourge. With what end in view have they seized the citadel of Cranaus, the sacred shrine that is raised upon the inaccessible rock of the Acropolis? Question them; be cautious and not too credulous. 'Twould be culpable negligence not to pierce the mystery, if we may.

MAGISTRATE *(addressing the women)*. I would ask you first why ye have barred our gates.

LYSISTRATA. To seize the treasury; no more money, no more war.

MAGISTRATE. Then money is the cause of the War?

LYSISTRATA. And of all our troubles. 'Twas to find occasion to steal that Pisander and all the other agitators were for ever raising revolutions. Well and good! but they'll never get another drachma here.

MAGISTRATE. What do you propose to do then, pray?

LYSISTRATA. You ask me that! Why, we propose to administer the treasury ourselves.

MAGISTRATE. *You* do?

LYSISTRATA. What is there in that to surprise you? Do we not administer the budget of household expenses?

MAGISTRATE. But that is not the same thing.

LYSISTRATA How so — not the same thing?

MAGISTRATE. It is the treasury supplies the expenses of the War.

LYSISTRATA. That's our first principle — no War!

MAGISTRATE. What! and the safety of the city?

LYSISTRATA. We will provide for that.

MAGISTRATE You?

LYSISTRATA Yes, just we.

MAGISTRATE. What a sorry business!

LYSISTRATA. Yes, we're going to save you, whether you will or no.

MAGISTRATE. Oh! the impudence of the creatures!

LYSISTRATA. You seem annoyed! but there, you've got to come to it.

MAGISTRATE. But 'tis the very height of iniquity!

LYSISTRATA. We're going to save you, my man.

MAGISTRATE. But if I don't want to be saved?

LYSISTRATA. Why, all the more reason!

MAGISTRATE. But what a notion, to concern yourselves with questions of Peace and War!

Peace and War!

LYSISTRATA. We will explain our idea.

MAGISTRATE. Out with it then; quick, or … *(threatening her)*.

LYSISTRATA. Listen, and never a movement, please!

MAGISTRATE. Oh! it is too much for me! I cannot keep my temper!

A WOMAN. Then look out for yourself; you have more to fear than we have.

MAGISTRATE. Stop your croaking, old crow, you! *(To Lysistrata.)* Now you, say your say.

LYSISTRATA. Willingly. All the long time the War has lasted, we have endured in modest silence all you men did; we never allowed ourselves to open our lips. We were far from satisfied, for we knew how things were going; often in our homes we would hear you discussing, upside down and inside out, some important turn of affairs. Then with sad hearts, but smiling lips, we would ask you: Well, in to-day's Assembly did they vote Peace? — But, "Mind your own business!" the husband would growl, "Hold your tongue, do!" And I would say no more.

A WOMAN. I would not have held my tongue though, not I!

MAGISTRATE. You would have been reduced to silence by blows then.

LYSISTRATA. Well, for my part, I would say no more. But presently I would come to know you had arrived at some fresh decision more fatally foolish than ever. "Ah! my dear man," I would say, "what madness next!" But he would only look at me askance and say: "Just weave your web, do; else your cheeks will smart for hours. War is men's business!"

MAGISTRATE. Bravo! well said indeed!

LYSISTRATA. How now, wretched man? not to let us contend against your follies, was bad enough! But presently we heard you asking out loud in the open street: "Is there never a man left in Athens?" and, "No, not one, not one," you were assured in reply. Then, then we made up our minds without more delay to make common cause to save Greece. Open your ears to our wise counsels and

hold your tongues, and we may yet put things on a better footing.

MAGISTRATE. *You* put things indeed! Oh! 'tis too much! The insolence of the creatures! Silence, I say.

LYSISTRATA. Silence yourself!

MAGISTRATE. May I die a thousand deaths ere I obey one who wears a veil!

LYSISTRATA. If that's all that troubles you, here, take my veil, wrap it round your head, and hold your tongue. Then take this basket; put on a girdle, card wool, munch beans. The War shall be women's business.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Lay aside your water-pots, we will guard them, we will help our friends and companions. For myself, I will never weary of the dance; my knees will never grow stiff with fatigue. I will brave everything with my dear allies, on whom Nature has lavished virtue, grace, boldness, cleverness, and whose wisely directed energy is going to save the State. Oh! my good, gallant Lysistrata, and all my friends, be ever like a bundle of nettles; never let your anger slacken; the winds of fortune blow our way.

LYSISTRATA. May gentle Love and the sweet Cyprian Queen shower seductive charms on our bosoms and all our person. If only we may stir so amorous a lust among the men that their tools stand stiff as sticks, we shall indeed deserve the name of peace-makers among the Greeks.

MAGISTRATE. How will that be, pray?

LYSISTRATA. To begin with, we shall not see you any more running like mad fellows to the Market holding lance in fist.

A WOMAN. That will be something gained, anyway, by the Paphian goddess, it will!

LYSISTRATA. Now we see 'em, mixed up with saucepans and kitchen stuff, armed to the teeth, looking like wild Corybantes!

MAGISTRATE. Why, of course; that's how brave men should do.

LYSISTRATA. Oh! but what a funny sight, to behold a man wearing a Gorgon's-head buckler coming along to buy fish!

Gorgon's head buckler coming along to buy fish!

A WOMAN. 'Tother day in the Market I saw a phylarch with flowing ringlets; he was a-horseback, and was pouring into his helmet the broth he had just bought at an old dame's stall. There was a Thracian warrior too, who was brandishing his lance like Tereus in the play; he had scared a good woman selling figs into a perfect panic, and was gobbling up all her ripest fruit.

MAGISTRATE. And how, pray, would you propose to restore peace and order in all the countries of Greece?

LYSISTRATA. 'Tis the easiest thing in the world!

MAGISTRATE. Come, tell us how; I am curious to know.

LYSISTRATA. When we are winding thread, and it is tangled, we pass the spool across and through the skein, now this way, now that way; even so, to finish off the War, we shall send embassies hither and thither and everywhere, to disentangle matters.

MAGISTRATE. And 'tis with your yarn, and your skeins, and your spools, you think to appease so many bitter enmities, you silly women?

LYSISTRATA. If only you had common sense, you would always do in politics the same as we do with our yarn.

MAGISTRATE. Come, how is that, eh?

LYSISTRATA. First we wash the yarn to separate the grease and filth; do the same with all bad citizens, sort them out and drive them forth with rods— 'tis the refuse of the city. Then for all such as come crowding up in search of employments and offices, we must card them thoroughly; then, to bring them all to the same standard, pitch them pell-mell into the same basket, resident aliens or no, allies, debtors to the State, all mixed up together. Then as for our Colonies, you must think of them as so many isolated hanks; find the ends of the separate threads, draw them to a centre here, wind them into one, make one great hank of the lot, out of which the Public can weave itself a good, stout tunic.

MAGISTRATE. Is it not a sin and a shame to see them carding and winding the State, these women who have neither art nor part in the burdens of the War?

LYSISTRATA. What! wretched man! why, ’tis a far heavier burden to us than to you. In the first place, we bear sons who go off to fight far away from Athens.

MAGISTRATE. Enough said! do not recall sad and sorry memories!

LYSISTRATA. Then secondly, instead of enjoying the pleasures of love and making the best of our youth and beauty, we are left to languish far from our husbands, who are all with the army. But say no more of ourselves; what afflicts me is to see our girls growing old in lonely grief.

MAGISTRATE. Don’t the men grow old too?

LYSISTRATA. That is not the same thing. When the soldier returns from the wars, even though he has white hair, he very soon finds a young wife. But a woman has only one summer; if she does not make hay while the sun shines, no one will afterwards have anything to say to her, and she spends her days consulting oracles, that never send her a husband.

MAGISTRATE. But the old man who can still erect his organ …

LYSISTRATA. But you, why don’t you get done with it and die? You are rich; go buy yourself a bier, and I will knead you a honey-cake for Cerberus. Here, take this garland. *(Drenching him with water.)* FIRST WOMAN. And this one too. *(Drenching him with water.)*

SECOND WOMAN. And these fillets. *(Drenching him with water.)*

LYSISTRATA. What do you lack more? Step aboard the boat; Charon is waiting for you, you’re keeping him from pushing off.

MAGISTRATE. To treat me so scurvily! What an insult! I will go show myself to my fellow-magistrates just as I am.

LYSISTRATA. What! are you blaming us for not having exposed you according to custom? Nay, console yourself; we will not fail to offer up the third-day sacrifice for you, first thing in the morning.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Awake, friends of freedom; let us hold ourselves aye ready to act. I suspect a mighty peril; I foresee another Tyranny like Hippias’. I am sore afraid the Laconians assembled here with Cleisthenes have, by a

stratagem of war, stirred up these women, enemies of the gods, to seize upon our treasury and the funds whereby I lived. Is it not a sin and a shame for them to interfere in advising the citizens, to prate of shields and lances, and to ally themselves with Laconians, fellows I trust no more than I would so many famished wolves? The whole thing, my friends, is nothing else but an attempt to re-establish Tyranny. But I will never submit; I will be on my guard for the future; I will always carry a blade hidden under myrtle boughs; I will post myself in the Public Square under arms, shoulder to shoulder with Aristogiton; and now, to make a start, I must just break a few of that cursed old jade's teeth yonder.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Nay, never play the brave man, else when you go back home, your own mother won't know you. But, dear friends and allies, first let us lay our burdens down; then, citizens all, hear what I have to say. I have useful counsel to give our city, which deserves it well at my hands for the brilliant distinctions it has lavished on my girlhood. At seven years of age, I was bearer of the sacred vessels; at ten, I pounded barley for the altar of Athené; next, clad in a robe of yellow silk, I was *little bear* to Artemis at the Brauronia; presently, grown a tall, handsome maiden, they put a necklace of dried figs about my neck, and I was Basket-Bearer. So surely I am bound to give my best advice to Athens. What matters that I was born a woman, if I can cure your misfortunes? I pay my share of tolls and taxes, by giving men to the State. But you, you miserable greybeards, you contribute nothing to the public charges; on the contrary, you have wasted the treasure of our forefathers, as it was called, the treasure amassed in the days of the Persian Wars. You pay nothing at all in return; and into the bargain you endanger our lives and liberties by your mistakes. Have you one word to say for yourselves? … Ah! don't irritate me, you there, or I'll lay my slipper across your jaws; and it's pretty heavy.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Outrage upon outrage! things are going from bad to worse. Let us punish the minxes, every one of us that has a man's appendages to boast of. Come, off with our tunics, for a man must savour of manhood; come, my friends, let us strip naked from head to foot. Courage, I say, we who in our day garrisoned Lipsydrion; let us be young again, and shake off eld. If we give them the least hold over us, 'tis all up! their audacity will know no bounds! We shall see them building ships, and fighting sea-fights, like Artemisia; nay, if they want to mount and ride as cavalry, we had best cashier the knights, for indeed women excel in riding, and have a fine, firm seat for the gallop. Just think of all those squadrons of Amazons Micon has painted for us engaged in hand-to-hand

combat with men. Come then, we must e'en fit collars to all these willing necks.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. By the blessed goddesses, if you anger me, I will let loose the beast of my evil passions, and a very hailstorm of blows will set you yelling for help. Come, dames, off tunics, and quick's the word; women must scent the savour of women in the throes of passion…. Now just you dare to measure strength with me, old greybeard, and I warrant you you'll never eat garlic or black beans more. No, not a word! my anger is at boiling point, and I'll do with you what the beetle did with the eagle's eggs. I laugh at your threats, so long as I have on my side Lampito here, and the noble Theban, my dear Ismenia…. Pass decree on decree, you can do us no hurt, you wretch abhorred of all your fellows. Why, only yesterday, on occasion of the feast of Hecaté, I asked my neighbours of Boeotia for one of their daughters for whom my girls have a lively liking — a fine, fat eel to wit; and if they did not refuse, all along of your silly decrees! We shall never cease to suffer the like, till someone gives you a neat trip-up and breaks your neck for you!

CHORUS OF WOMEN *(addressing Lysistrata)*. You, Lysistrata, you who are leader of our glorious enterprise, why do I see you coming towards me with so gloomy an air?

LYSISTRATA. 'Tis the behaviour of these naughty women, 'tis the female heart and female weakness so discourages me.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Tell us, tell us, what is it?

LYSISTRATA. I only tell the simple truth.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. What has happened so disconcerting; come, tell your friends.

LYSISTRATA. Oh! the thing is so hard to tell — yet so impossible to conceal.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Nay, never seek to hide any ill that has befallen our cause.

LYSISTRATA. To blurt it out in a word — we are in heat!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Oh! Zeus, oh! Zeus!

LYSISTRATA. What use calling upon Zeus? The thing is even as I say. I cannot stop them any longer from lusting after the men. They are all for deserting. The first I caught was slipping out by the postern gate near the cave of Pan; another was letting herself down by a rope and pulley; a third was busy preparing her escape; while a fourth, perched on a bird's back, was just taking wing for Orsilochus' house, when I seized her by the hair. One and all, they are inventing excuses to be off home. Look! there goes one, trying to get out! Halloa there! whither away so fast?

FIRST WOMAN. I want to go home; I have some Miletus wool in the house, which is getting all eaten up by the worms.

LYSISTRATA. Bah! you and your worms! go back, I say!

FIRST WOMAN. I will return immediately, I swear I will by the two goddesses! I only have just to spread it out on the bed.

LYSISTRATA. You shall not do anything of the kind! I say, you shall not go.

FIRST WOMAN. Must I leave my wool to spoil then?

LYSISTRATA. Yes, if need be.

SECOND WOMAN. Unhappy woman that I am! Alas for my flax! I've left it at home unstript!

LYSISTRATA. So, here's another trying to escape to go home and strip her flax forsooth!

SECOND WOMAN. Oh! I swear by the goddess of light, the instant I have put it in condition I will come straight back.

LYSISTRATA. You shall do nothing of the kind! If once you began, others would want to follow suit.

THIRD WOMAN. Oh! goddess divine, Ilithyia, patroness of women in labour, stay, stay the birth, till I have reached a spot less hallowed than Athene's Mount!

LYSISTRATA. What mean you by these silly tales?

THIRD WOMAN. I am going to have a child — now, this minute.

LYSISTRATA. But you were not pregnant yesterday!

THIRD WOMAN. Well, I am to-day. Oh! let me go in search of the midwife, Lysistrata, quick, quick!

LYSISTRATA. What is this fable you are telling me? Ah! what have you got there so hard?

THIRD WOMAN. A male child.

LYSISTRATA. No, no, by Aphrodité! nothing of the sort! Why, it feels like something hollow — a pot or a kettle. Oh! you baggage, if you have not got the sacred helmet of Pallas — and you said you were with child!

THIRD WOMAN. And so I am, by Zeus, I am!

LYSISTRATA. Then why this helmet, pray?

THIRD WOMAN. For fear my pains should seize me in the Acropolis; I mean to lay my eggs in this helmet, as the doves do.

LYSISTRATA. Excuses and pretences every word! the thing's as clear as daylight. Anyway, you must stay here now till the fifth day, your day of purification.

THIRD WOMAN. I cannot sleep any more in the Acropolis, now I have seen the snake that guards the Temple.

FOURTH WOMAN. Ah! and those confounded owls with their dismal hooting! I cannot get a wink of rest, and I'm just dying of fatigue.

LYSISTRATA. You wicked women, have done with your falsehoods! You want your husbands, that's plain enough. But don't you think they want you just as badly? They are spending dreadful nights, oh! I know that well enough. But hold out, my dears, hold out! A little more patience, and the victory will be ours. An Oracle promises us success, if only we remain united. Shall I repeat the words?

FIRST WOMAN. Yes, tell us what the Oracle declares.

LYSISTRATA. Silence then! Now— "Whenas the swallows, fleeing before the hoopoes, shall have all flocked together in one place, and shall refrain them from all amorous commerce, then will be the end of all the ills of life; yea, and Zeus, which doth thunder in the skies, shall set above what was erst below…."

CHORUS OF WOMEN. What! shall the men be underneath?

LYSISTRATA. "But if dissension do arise among the swallows, and they take wing from the holy Temple, 'twill be said there is never a more wanton bird in all the world."

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Ye gods! the prophecy is clear. Nay, never let us be cast down by calamity! let us be brave to bear, and go back to our posts. 'Twere shameful indeed not to trust the promises of the Oracle.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. I want to tell you a fable they used to relate to me when I was a little boy. This is it: Once upon a time there was a young man called Melanion, who hated the thought of marriage so sorely that he fled away to the wilds. So he dwelt in the mountains, wove himself nets, kept a dog and caught hares. He never, never came back, he had such a horror of women. As chaste as Melanion, we loathe the jades just as much as he did.

AN OLD MAN. You dear old woman, I would fain kiss you.

A WOMAN. I will set you crying without onions.

OLD MAN. … And give you a sound kicking.

OLD WOMAN. Ah, ha! what a dense forest you have there! *(Pointing.)*

OLD MAN. So was Myronides one of the best-bearded of men o' this side; his backside was all black, and he terrified his enemies as much as Phormio.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. I want to tell you a fable too, to match yours about Melanion. Once there was a certain man called Timon, a tough customer, and a whimsical, a true son of the Furies, with a face that seemed to glare out of a thorn-bush. He withdrew from the world because he couldn't abide bad men, after vomiting a thousand curses at 'em. He had a holy horror of ill-conditioned fellows, but he was mighty tender towards women.

A WOMAN. Suppose I up and broke your jaw for you!

AN OLD MAN. I am not a bit afraid of you.

A WOMAN. Suppose I let fly a good kick at you?

OLD MAN. I should see your backside then.

WOMAN. You would see that, for all my age, it is very well attended to, and all fresh singed smooth.

LYSISTRATA. Ho there! come quick, come quick!

FIRST WOMAN. What is it? Why these cries?

LYSISTRATA. A man! a man! I see him approaching all afire with the flames of love. Oh! divine Queen of Cyprus, Paphos and Cythera, I pray you still be propitious to our emprise.

FIRST WOMAN. Where is he, this unknown foe?

LYSISTRATA. Yonder — beside the Temple of Demeter.

FIRST WOMAN. Yes, indeed, I see him; but who is it?

LYSISTRATA. Look, look! does any of you recognize him?

FIRST WOMAN. I do, I do! 'tis my husband Cinesias.

LYSISTRATA. To work then! Be it your task to inflame and torture and torment him. Seductions, caresses, provocations, refusals, try every means! Grant every favour, — always excepting what is forbidden by our oath on the wine-bowl.

MYRRHINÉ. Have no fear, I undertake the work.

LYSISTRATA. Well, I will stay here to help you cajole the man and set his passions aflame. The rest of you, withdraw.

CINESIAS. Alas! alas! how I am tortured by spasm and rigid convulsion!
Oh! I am racked on the wheel!

LYSISTRATA. Who is this that dares to pass our lines?

CINESIAS. It is I.

LYSISTRATA. What, a man?

CINESIAS. Yes, no doubt about it, a man!

LYSISTRATA. Begone!

CINESIAS. But who are you that thus repulses me?

LYSISTRATA. The sentinel of the day.

CINESIAS. By all the gods, call Myrrhiné hither.

LYSISTRATA. Call Myrrhiné hither, quotha? And pray, who are you?

CINESIAS. I am her husband, Cinesias, son of Peon.

LYSISTRATA. Ah! good day, my dear friend. Your name is not unknown amongst us. Your wife has it for ever on her lips; and she never touches an egg or an apple without saying: "'Twill be for Cinesias."

CINESIAS. Really and truly?

LYSISTRATA. Yes, indeed, by Aphrodité! And if we fall to talking of men, quick your wife declares: "Oh! all the rest, they're good for nothing compared with Cinesias."

CINESIAS. Oh! I beseech you, go and call her to me.

LYSISTRATA. And what will you give me for my trouble?

CINESIAS.

This, if you like *(handling his tool)*. I will give you what I have there!

LYSISTRATA. Well, well, I will tell her to come.

CINESIAS. Quick, oh! be quick! Life has no more charms for me since she left

my house. I am sad, sad, when I go indoors; it all seems so empty; my victuals have lost their savour. Desire is eating out my heart!

MYRRHINÉ. I love him, oh! I love him; but he won't let himself be loved. No! I shall not come.

CINESIAS. Myrrhiné, my little darling Myrrhiné, what are you saying? Come down to me quick.

MYRRHINÉ. No indeed, not I.

CINESIAS. I call you, Myrrhiné, Myrrhiné; will you not come?

MYRRHINÉ. Why should you call me? You do not want me.

CINESIAS. Not want you! Why, my weapon stands stiff with desire!

MYRRHINÉ. Good-bye.

CINESIAS. Oh! Myrrhiné, Myrrhiné, in our child's name, hear me; at any rate hear the child! Little lad, call your mother.

CHILD. Mammy, mammy, mammy!

CINESIAS. There, listen! Don't you pity the poor child? It's six days now you've never washed and never fed the child.

MYRRHINÉ. Poor darling, your father takes mighty little care of you!

CINESIAS. Come down, dearest, come down for the child's sake.

MYRRHINÉ. Ah! what a thing it is to be a mother! Well, well, we must come down, I suppose.

CINESIAS. Why, how much younger and prettier she looks! And how she looks at me so lovingly! Her cruelty and scorn only redouble my passion.

MYRRHINÉ. You are as sweet as your father is provoking! Let me kiss you, my treasure, mother's darling!

CINESIAS. Ah! what a bad thing it is to let yourself be led away by other

women! Why give me such pain and suffering, and yourself into the bargain?

MYRRHINÉ. Hands off, sir!

CINESIAS. Everything is going to rack and ruin in the house.

MYRRHINÉ. I don't care.

CINESIAS. But your web that's all being pecked to pieces by the cocks and hens, don't you care for that?

MYRRHINÉ. Precious little.

CINESIAS. And Aphrodite, whose mysteries you have not celebrated for so long? Oh! won't you come back home?

MYRRHINÉ. No, at least, not till a sound Treaty put an end to the War.

CINESIAS. Well, if you wish it so much, why, we'll make it, your Treaty.

MYRRHINÉ. Well and good! When that's done, I will come home. Till then, I am bound by an oath.

CINESIAS. At any rate, let's have a short time together.

MYRRHINÉ. No, no, no! … all the same I cannot say I don't love you.

CINESIAS. You love me? Then why refuse what I ask, my little girl, my sweet Myrrhiné.

MYRRHINÉ. You must be joking! What, before the child!

CINESIAS. Manes, carry the lad home. There, you see, the child is gone; there's nothing to hinder us; let us to work!

MYRRHINÉ. But, miserable man, where, where are we to do it?

CINESIAS. In the cave of Pan; nothing could be better.

MYRRHINÉ. But how to purify myself, before going back into the citadel?

CINESIAS. Nothing easier! you can wash at the Clepsydra.

MYRRHINÉ. But my oath? Do you want me to perjure myself?

CINESIAS. I take all responsibility; never make yourself anxious.

MYRRHINÉ. Well, I'll be off, then, and find a bed for us.

CINESIAS. Oh! 'tis not worth while; we can lie on the ground surely.

MYRRHINÉ. No, no! bad man as you are, I don't like your lying on the bare earth.

CINESIAS. Ah! how the dear girl loves me!

MYRRHINÉ *(coming back with a bed)*. Come, get to bed quick; I am going to undress. But, plague take it, we must get a mattress.

CINESIAS. A mattress! Oh! no, never mind!

MYRRHINÉ. No, by Artemis! lie on the bare sacking, never! That were too squalid.

CINESIAS. A kiss!

MYRRHINÉ. Wait a minute!

CINESIAS. Oh! by the great gods, be quick back!

MYRRHINÉ *(coming back with a mattress)*. Here is a mattress. Lie down, I am just going to undress. But, but you've got no pillow.

CINESIAS. I don't want one, no, no.

MYRRHINÉ. But *I* do.

CINESIAS. Oh! dear, oh, dear! they treat my poor penis for all the world like Heracles.

MYRRHINÉ *(coming back with a pillow)*. There, lift your head, dear!

CINESIAS. That’s really everything.

MYRRHINÉ. Is it everything, I wonder.

CINESIAS. Come, my treasure.

MYRRHINÉ. I am just unfastening my girdle. But remember what you promised me about making Peace; mind you keep your word.

CINESIAS. Yes, yes, upon my life I will.

MYRRHINÉ. Why, you have no blanket.

CINESIAS. Great Zeus! what matter of that? ’tis you I want to fuck.

MYRRHINÉ Never fear — directly, directly! I’ll be back in no time.

CINESIAS. The woman will kill me with her blankets!

MYRRHINÉ *(coming back with a blanket)*. Now, get up for one moment.

CINESIAS. But I tell you, our friend here is up — all stiff and ready!

MYRRHINÉ. Would you like me to scent you?

CINESIAS. No, by Apollo, no, please!

MYRRHINÉ. Yes, by Aphrodité, but I will, whether you wish it or no.

CINESIAS. Ah! great Zeus, may she soon be done!

MYRRHINÉ *(coming back with a flask of perfume)*. Hold out your hand; now rub it in.

CINESIAS. Oh! in Apollo’s name, I don’t much like the smell of it; but perhaps ‘twill improve when it’s well rubbed in. It does not somehow smack of the marriage bed!

MYRRHINÉ. There, what a scatterbrain I am; if I have not brought Rhodian perfumes!

CINESIAS. Never mind, dearest, let be now.

MYRRHINÉ. You are joking!

CINESIAS. Deuce take the man who first invented perfumes, say I!

MYRRHINÉ *(coming back with another flask)*. Here, take this bottle.

CINESIAS. I have a better all ready for your service, darling. Come, you provoking creature, to bed with you, and don't bring another thing.

MYRRHINÉ. Coming, coming; I'm just slipping off my shoes. Dear boy, will you vote for peace?

CINESIAS. I'll think about it. *(Myrrhiné runs away.)* I'm a dead man, she is killing me! She has gone, and left me in torment! I must have someone to fuck, I must! Ah me! the loveliest of women has choused and cheated me. Poor little lad *(addressing his penis)*, how am I to give you what you want so badly? Where is Cynalopex? quick, man, get him a nurse, do!

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Poor, miserable wretch, baulked in your amorousness! what tortures are yours! Ah! you fill me with pity. Could any man's back and loins stand such a strain? His organ stands stiff and rigid, and there's never a wench to help him!

CINESIAS. Ye gods in heaven, what pains I suffer!

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Well, there it is; 'tis her doing, that abandoned hussy!

CINESIAS. Nay, nay! rather say that sweetest, dearest darling.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. That dearest darling? no, no, that hussy, say I! Zeus, thou god of the skies, canst not let loose a hurricane, to sweep them all up into the air, and whirl 'em round, then drop 'em down crash! and impale them on the point of his weapon!

A HERALD. Say, where shall I find the Senate and the Prytanes? I am bearer of despatches.

MAGISTRATE. But are you a man or a Priapus, pray?

HERALD. Oh! but he's mighty simple. I am a herald, of course, I swear I am, and I come from Sparta about making peace.

MAGISTRATE. But look, you are hiding a lance under your clothes, surely.

HERALD. No, nothing of the sort.

MAGISTRATE. Then why do you turn away like that, and hold your cloak out from your body? Have you gotten swellings in the groin with your journey?

HERALD. By the twin brethren! the man's an old maniac.

MAGISTRATE. Ah, ha! my fine lad, why I can see it standing, oh fie!

HERALD. I tell you no! but enough of this foolery.

MAGISTRATE. Well, what is it you have there then?

HERALD. A Lacedaemonian 'skytalé.'

MAGISTRATE. Oh, indeed, a 'skytalé,' is it? Well, well, speak out frankly; I know all about these matters. How are things going at Sparta now?

HERALD. Why, everything is turned upside down at Sparta; and all the allies are half dead with lusting. We simply must have Pellené.

MAGISTRATE. What is the reason of it all? Is it the god Pan's doing?

HERALD. No, but Lampito's and the Spartan women's, acting at her instigation; they have denied the men all access to their cunts.

MAGISTRATE. But whatever do you do?

HERALD. We are at our wits' end; we walk bent double, just as if we were carrying lanterns in a wind. The jades have sworn we shall not so much as touch their cunts till we have all agreed to conclude peace.

MAGISTRATE. Ha, ha! So I see now, 'tis a general conspiracy embracing all Greece. Go you back to Sparta and bid them send Envoys with plenary powers to treat for peace. I will urge our Senators myself to name Plenipotentiaries from us; and to persuade them, why, I will show them this. *(Pointing to his erect*

penis.) HERALD. What could be better? I fly at your command.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. No wild beast is there, no flame of fire, more fierce and untameable than woman; the panther is less savage and shameless.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. And yet you dare to make war upon me, wretch, when you might have me for your most faithful friend and ally.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Never, never can my hatred cease towards women.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Well, please yourself. Still I cannot bear to leave you all naked as you are; folks would laugh at me. Come, I am going to put this tunic on you.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. You are right, upon my word! it was only in my confounded fit of rage I took it off.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Now at any rate you look like a man, and they won't make fun of you. Ah! if you had not offended me so badly, I would take out that nasty insect you have in your eye for you.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Ah! so that's what was annoying me so! Look, here's a ring, just remove the insect, and show it me. By Zeus! it has been hurting my eye this ever so long.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Well, I agree, though your manners are not over and above pleasant. Oh! what a huge great gnat! just look! It's from Tricorysus, for sure.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. A thousand thanks! the creature was digging a regular well in my eye; now it's gone, my tears flow freely.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. I will wipe them for you — bad, naughty man though you are. Now, just one kiss.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. No — a kiss, certainly not!

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Just one, whether you like it or not.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Oh! those confounded women! how they do cajole

us! How true the saying: "'Tis impossible to live with the baggages, impossible to live without 'em"! Come, let us agree for the future not to regard each other any more as enemies; and to clinch the bargain, let us sing a choric song.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. We desire, Athenians, to speak ill of no man; but on the contrary to say much good of everyone, and to *do* the like. We have had enough of misfortunes and calamities. Is there any, man or woman, wants a bit of money — two or three minas or so; well, our purse is full. If only peace is concluded, the borrower will not have to pay back. Also I'm inviting to supper a few Carystian friends, who are excellently well qualified. I have still a drop of good soup left, and a young porker I'm going to kill, and the flesh will be sweet and tender. I shall expect you at my house to-day; but first away to the baths with you, you and your children; then come all of you, ask no one's leave, but walk straight up, as if you were at home; never fear, the door will be … shut in your faces!

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Ah! here come the Envoys from Sparta with their long flowing beards; why, you would think they wore a cage between their thighs. *(Enter the Lacedaemonian Envoys.)* Hail to you, first of all, Laconians; then tell us how you fare.

A LACONIAN. No need for many words; you see what a state we are in.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Alas! the situation grows more and more strained! the intensity of the thing is just frightful.

LACONIAN. 'Tis beyond belief. But to work! summon your Commissioners, and let us patch up the best peace we may.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Ah! our men too, like wrestlers in the arena, cannot endure a rag over their bellies; 'tis an athlete's malady, which only exercise can remedy.

AN ATHENIAN. Can anybody tell us where Lysistrata is? Surely she will have some compassion on our condition.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Look! 'tis the very same complaint. *(Addressing the Athenian.)* Don't you feel of mornings a strong nervous tension?

ATHENIAN. Yes, and a dreadful, dreadful torture it is! Unless peace is made

very soon, we shall find no resource but to fuck Clisthenes.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Take my advice, and put on your clothes again; one of the fellows who mutilated the Hermae might see you.

ATHENIAN. You are right.

LACONIAN. Quite right. There, I will slip on my tunic.

ATHENIAN. Oh! what a terrible state we are in! Greeting to you, Laconian fellow-sufferers.

LACONIAN *(addressing one of his countrymen)*. Ah! my boy, what a thing it would have been if these fellows had seen us just now when our tools were on full stand!

ATHENIAN. Speak out, Laconians, what is it brings you here?

LACONIAN. We have come to treat for peace.

ATHENIAN. Well said; we are of the same mind. Better call Lysistrata then; she is the only person will bring us to terms.

LACONIAN. Yes, yes — and Lysistratus into the bargain, if you will.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN. Needless to call her; she has heard your voices, and here she comes.

ATHENIAN. Hail, boldest and bravest of womankind! The time is come to show yourself in turn uncompromising and conciliatory, exacting and yielding, haughty and condescending. Call up all your skill and artfulness. Lo! the foremost men in Hellas, seduced by your fascinations, are agreed to entrust you with the task of ending their quarrels.

LYSISTRATA. ‘Twill be an easy task — if only they refrain from mutual indulgence in masculine love; if they do, I shall know the fact at once. Now, where is the gentle goddess Peace? Lead hither the Laconian Envoys. But, look you, no roughness or violence; our husbands always behaved so boorishly. Bring them to me with smiles, as women should. If any refuse to give you his hand, then catch him by the penis and draw him politely forward. Bring up the

Athenians too; you may take them just how you will. Laconians, approach; and you, Athenians, on my other side. Now hearken all! I am but a woman; but I have good common sense; Nature has dowered me with discriminating judgment, which I have yet further developed, thanks to the wise teachings of my father and the elders of the city. First I must bring a reproach against you that applies equally to both sides. At Olympia, and Thermopylae, and Delphi, and a score of other places too numerous to mention, you celebrate before the same altars ceremonies common to all Hellenes; yet you go cutting each other's throats, and sacking Hellenic cities, when all the while the Barbarian is yonder threatening you! That is my first point.

ATHENIAN. Ah, ah! concupiscence is killing me!

LYSISTRATA. Now 'tis to you I address myself, Laconians. Have you forgotten how Periclides, your own countryman, sat a suppliant before our altars? How pale he was in his purple robes! He had come to crave an army of us; 'twas the time when Messenia was pressing you sore, and the Sea-god was shaking the earth. Cimon marched to your aid at the head of four thousand hoplites, and saved Lacedaemon. And, after such a service as that, you ravage the soil of your benefactors!

ATHENIAN. They do wrong, very wrong, Lysistrata.

LACONIAN. We do wrong, very wrong. Ah! great gods! what lovely thighs she has!

LYSISTRATA. And now a word to the Athenians. Have you no memory left of how, in the days when ye wore the tunic of slaves, the Laconians came, spear in hand, and slew a host of Thessalians and partisans of Hippias the Tyrant? They, and they only, fought on your side on that eventful day; they delivered you from despotism, and thanks to them our Nation could change the short tunic of the slave for the long cloak of the free man.

LACONIAN. I have never seen a woman of more gracious dignity.

ATHENIAN. I have never seen a woman with a finer cunt!

LYSISTRATA. Bound by such ties of mutual kindness, how can you bear to be at war? Stop, stay the hateful strife, be reconciled; what hinders you?

LACONIAN. We are quite ready, if they will give us back our rampart.

LYSISTRATA. What rampart, my dear man?

LACONIAN. Pylos, which we have been asking for and craving for ever so long.

ATHENIAN. In the Sea-god's name, you shall never have it!

LYSISTRATA. Agree, my friends, agree.

ATHENIAN. But then what city shall we be able to stir up trouble in?

LYSISTRATA. Ask for another place in exchange.

ATHENIAN. Ah! that's the ticket! Well, to begin with, give us Echinus, the Maliac gulf adjoining, and the two legs of Megara.

LACONIAN. Oh! surely, surely not all that, my dear sir.

LYSISTRATA. Come to terms; never make a difficulty of two legs more or less!

ATHENIAN. Well, I'm ready now to off coat and cultivate my land.

LACONIAN. And I too, to dung it to start with.

LYSISTRATA. That's just what you shall do, once peace is signed. So, if you really want to make it, go consult your allies about the matter.

ATHENIAN. What allies, I should like to know? Why, we are *all* on the stand; not one but is mad to be fucking. What we all want, is to be abed with our wives; how should our allies fail to second our project?

LACONIAN. And ours the same, for certain sure!

ATHENIANS. The Carystians first and foremost, by the gods!

LYSISTRATA. Well said, indeed! Now be off to purify yourselves for entering the Acropolis, where the women invite you to supper; we will empty our provision baskets to do you honour. At table, you will exchange oaths and

pledges; then each man will go home with his wife.

ATHENIAN. Come along then, and as quick as may be.

LACONIAN. Lead on; I'm your man.

ATHENIAN. Quick, quick's the word, say I.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Embroidered stuffs, and dainty tunics, and flowing gowns, and golden ornaments, everything I have, I offer them you with all my heart; take them all for your children, for your girls, against they are chosen "basket-bearers" to the goddess. I invite you every one to enter, come in and choose whatever you will; there is nothing so well fastened, you cannot break the seals, and carry away the contents. Look about you everywhere … you won't find a blessed thing, unless you have sharper eyes than mine. And if any of you lacks corn to feed his slaves and his young and numerous family, why, I have a few grains of wheat at home; let him take what I have to give, a big twelve-pound loaf included. So let my poorer neighbours all come with bags and wallets; my man, Manes, shall give them corn; but I warn them not to come near my door, or — beware the dog!

A MARKET-LOUNGER. I say, you, open the door!

A SLAVE. Go your way, I tell you. Why, bless me, they're sitting down now; I shall have to singe 'em with my torch to make 'em stir! What an impudent lot of fellows!

MARKET-LOUNGER. I don't mean to budge.

SLAVE. Well, as you *must* stop, and I don't want to offend you — but you'll see some queer sights.

MARKET-LOUNGER. Well and good, I've no objection.

SLAVE. No, no, you must be off — or I'll tear your hair out, I will; be off, I say, and don't annoy the Laconian Envoys; they're just coming out from the banquet-hall.

AN ATHENIAN. Such a merry banquet I've never seen before! The Laconians were simply charming. After the drink is in, why, we're all wise men, all. It's

only natural, to be sure, for sober, we're all fools. Take my advice, my fellow-countrymen, our Envoys should always be drunk. We go to Sparta; we enter the city sober; why, we must be picking a quarrel directly. We don't understand what they say to us, we imagine a lot they don't say at all, and we report home all wrong, all topsy-turvy. But, look you, to-day it's quite different; we're enchanted whatever happens; instead of Clitagoras, they might sing us Telamon, and we should clap our hands just the same. A perjury or two into the bargain, la! what does that matter to merry companions in their cups?

SLAVE. But here they are back again! Will you begone, you loafing scoundrels.

MARKET-LOUNGER. Ah ha! here's the company coming out already.

A LACONIAN. My dear, sweet friend, come, take your flute in hand; I would fain dance and sing my best in honour of the Athenians and our noble selves.

AN ATHENIAN. Yes, take your flute, i' the gods' name. What a delight to see him dance!

CHORUS OF LACONIANS. Oh Mnemosyné! inspire these men, inspire my muse who knows our exploits and those of the Athenians. With what a godlike ardour did they swoop down at Artemisium on the ships of the Medes! What a glorious victory was that! For the soldiers of Leonidas, they were like fierce wild-boars whetting their tushes. The sweat ran down their faces, and drenched all their limbs, for verily the Persians were as many as the sands of the seashore. Oh! Artemis, huntress queen, whose arrows pierce the denizens of the woods, virgin goddess, be thou favourable to the Peace we here conclude; through thee may our hearts be long united! May this treaty draw close for ever the bonds of a happy friendship! No more wiles and stratagems! Aid us, oh! aid us, maiden huntress!

LYSISTRATA. All is for the best; and now, Laconians, take your wives away home with you, and you, Athenians, yours. May husband live happily with wife, and wife with husband. Dance, dance, to celebrate our bliss, and let us be heedful to avoid like mistakes for the future.

CHORUS OF ATHENIANS Appear, appear, dancers, and the Graces with you! Let us invoke, one and all, Artemis, and her heavenly brother, gracious Apollo, patron of the dance, and Dionysus, whose eye darts flame, as he steps forward surrounded by the Maenad maids, and Zeus, who wields the flashing lightning,

and his august, thrice-blessed spouse, the Queen of Heaven! These let us invoke, and all the other gods, calling all the inhabitants of the skies to witness the noble Peace now concluded under the fond auspices of Aphrodité. Io Paean! Io Paean! dance, leap, as in honour of a victory won. Evoé! Evoé! And you, our Laconian guests, sing us a new and inspiring strain!

CHORUS OF LACONIANS. Leave once more, oh! leave once more the noble height of Taygetus, oh! Muse of Lacedaemon, and join us in singing the praises of Apollo of Amyclae, and Athena of the Brazen House, and the gallant twin sons of Tyndarus, who practise arms on the banks of Eurotas river. Haste, haste hither with nimble-footed pace, let us sing Sparta, the city that delights in choruses divinely sweet and graceful dances, when our maidens bound lightly by the river side, like frolicsome fillies, beating the ground with rapid steps and shaking their long locks in the wind, as Bacchantes wave their wands in the wild revels of the Wine-god. At their head, oh! chaste and beauteous goddess, daughter of Latona, Artemis, do thou lead the song and dance. A fillet binding thy waving tresses, appear in thy loveliness; leap like a fawn; strike thy divine hands together to animate the dance, and aid us to renown the valiant goddess of battles, great Athené of the Brazen House!

THE WOMEN CELEBRATING THE THESMOPHORIA

Anonymous translation for the Athenian Society, London, 1912

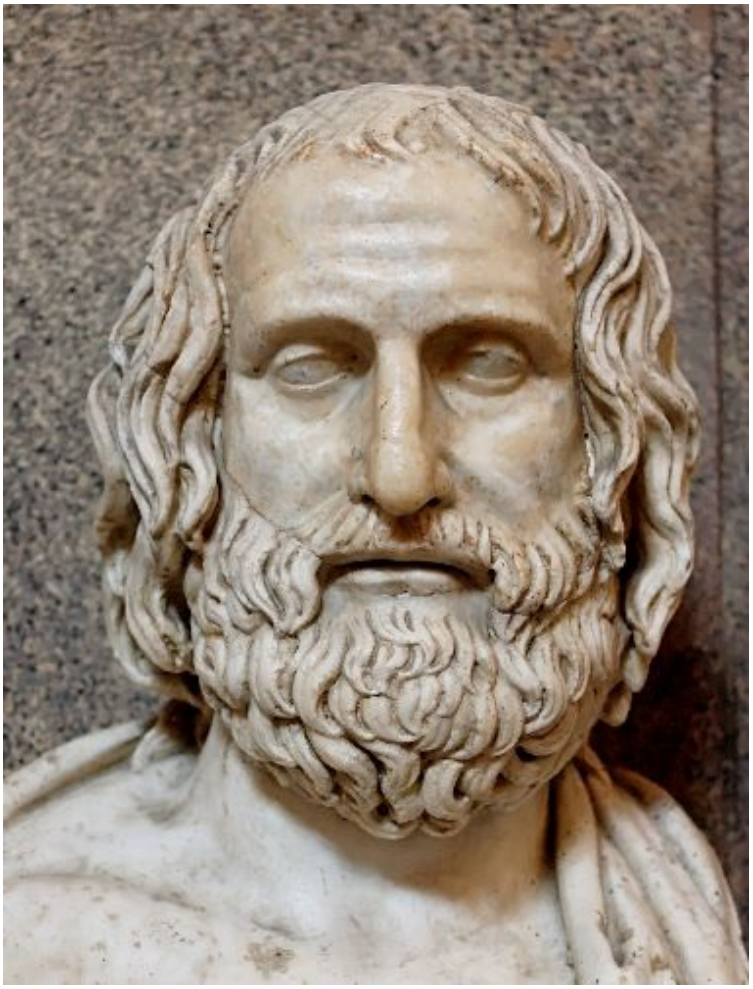
The *Θεσμοφοριάζουσαι* was first produced in 411 BC and like *Lysistrata* offers revealing insight into the subversive role of women in a male-dominated society, as well as providing an amusing satire of contemporary tragic poets. The play is also notable for Aristophanes' free adaptation of key structural elements of Old Comedy and for the absence of the anti-populist and anti-war comments that permeate his earlier works.

The play concerns the real-life tragedian Euripides, who is afraid that, "the women at the festival/Are going to kill me for insulting them!" *The Women Celebrating the Thesmophoria* presents the absurd premise that women are incensed by Euripides' continual portrayal of women as mad, murderous, and sexually depraved, and that they are using the festival of the Thesmophoria, an annual fertility celebration dedicated to Demeter, as an opportunity to plan their revenge on the tragedian.

Terrified of their retribution, Euripides seeks out the aid of his fellow tragedian, Agathon, in the hope of persuading his rival to spy for him and to be his advocate at the festival, requiring him to go disguised as a woman. Agathon is already dressed as a woman, in preparation for a play, but he believes that the women of Athens are jealous of him and he refuses to attend the festival for fear of being discovered. Euripides' aged in-law Mnesilochus then offers to go in Agathon's place and so Euripides shaves him, dresses him in women's clothes borrowed from Agathon and finally sends him off to the Thesmophorion, the location of the women's secret rites.

The play is celebrated for its reversal of sexual stereotypes, where men dress as women and the women appear to be the equal of men, particularly in their imitation of the democratic assembly. The sexual role-reversals can be understood to have a broad, political significance. The warrior ethos of an older generation versus the effete intellectualism of a younger generation is a debate that recurs in various forms throughout Aristophanes' works. Later on in *The Frogs*, for example, a debate is held between Aeschylus, who values Homer for the warrior ethos he inculcates in his audience, and Euripides who values the intellectual and philosophical quibbling of a legalistic society. The debate in *The Frogs* is won by Aeschylus and he is brought back from the dead to reform the

polis with his instructive poetry. In *The Women Celebrating the Thesmophoria,* the female Chorus argues that they are better than their men because they have preserved their heritage, as represented by the weaving shuttle, the wool-basket and the parasol, whereas the men have lost their spears and shields, referring to Athens' loss to Sparta in the war.



Bust of Euripides, Roman copy after a Greek original, c. 330 BC

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INTRODUCTION

Like the ‘Lysistrata,’ the ‘Thesmophoriazusae, or Women’s Festival,’ and the next following play, the ‘Ecclesiazusae, or Women in Council’ are comedies in which the fair sex play a great part, and also resemble that extremely *scabreux* production in the plentiful crop of doubtful ‘double entendres’ and highly suggestive situations they contain.

The play has more of a proper intrigue and formal dénouement than is general with our Author’s pieces, which, like modern extravaganzas and musical comedies, are often strung on a very slender thread of plot. The idea of the ‘Thesmophoriazusae’ is as follows.

Euripides is summoned as a notorious woman-hater and detractor of the female sex to appear for trial and judgment before the women of Athens assembled to celebrate the Thesmophoria, a festival held in honour of the goddesses Demeter and Persephone, from which men were rigidly excluded. The poet is terror-stricken, and endeavours to persuade his confrère, the tragedian Agathon, to attend the meeting in the guise of a woman to plead his cause, Agathon’s notorious effeminacy of costume and way of life lending itself to the deception; but the latter refuses point-blank. He then prevails on his father-in-law, Mnesilochus, to do him this favour, and shaves, depilates, and dresses him up accordingly. But so far from throwing oil on the troubled waters, Mnesilochus indulges in a long harangue full of violent abuse of the whole sex, and relates some scandalous stories of the naughty ways of peccant wives. The assembly suspects at once there is a man amongst them, and on examination of the old fellow’s person, this is proved to be the case. He flies for sanctuary to the altar, snatching a child from the arms of one of the women as a hostage, vowing to kill it if they molest him further. On investigation, however, the infant turns out to be a wine-skin dressed in baby’s clothes.

In despair Mnesilochus sends urgent messages to Euripides to come and rescue him from his perilous predicament. The latter then appears, and in successive characters selected from his different Tragedies — now Menelaus meeting Helen again in Egypt, now Echo sympathising with the chained Andromeda, presently Perseus about to release the heroine from her rock — pleads for his unhappy father-in-law. At length he succeeds in getting him away in the temporary absence of the guard, a Scythian archer, whom he entices from his post by the charms of a dancing-girl.

As may be supposed, the appearance of Mnesilochus among the women

dressed in women's clothes, the examination of his person to discover his true sex and his final detection, afford fine opportunities for a display of the broadest Aristophanic humour. The latter part of the play also, where various pieces of Euripides are burlesqued, is extremely funny; and must have been still more so when represented before an audience familiar with every piece and almost every line parodied, and played by actors trained and got up to imitate every trick and mannerism of appearance and delivery of the tragic actors who originally took the parts.

The 'Thesmophoriazusae' was produced in the year 412 B.C., six years before the death of Euripides, who is held up to ridicule in it, as he is in 'The Wasps' and several other of our Author's comedies.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

EURIPIDES.
MNESILOCHUS, Father-in-law of Euripides.
AGATHON.
SERVANT OF AGATHON.
CHORUS attending AGATHON.
HERALD.
WOMEN.
CLISTHENES.
A PRYTANIS or Member of the Council.
A SCYTHIAN or Police Officer.
CHORUS OF THESMOPHORIAZUSAE — women keeping the Feast of Demeter.

SCENE: In front of Agathon's house; afterwards in the precincts of the Temple of Demeter.

THE THESMOPHORIAZUSAE

OR

THE WOMEN CELEBRATING THE THESMOPHORIA

MNESILOCHUS. Great Zeus! will the swallow never appear to end the winter of my discontent? Why the fellow has kept me on the run ever since early this morning; he wants to kill me, that's certain. Before I lose my spleen entirely, Euripides, can you at least tell me whither you are leading me?

EURIPIDES. What need for you to hear what you are going to see?

MNESILOCHUS. How is that? Repeat it. No need for me to hear….

EURIPIDES. What you are going to see.

MNESILOCHUS. Nor consequently to see….

EURIPIDES. What you have to hear.

MNESILOCHUS. What is this wiseacre stuff you are telling me? I must neither see nor hear.

EURIPIDES. Ah! but you have two things there that are essentially distinct.

MNESILOCHUS. Seeing and hearing.

EURIPIDES. Undoubtedly.

MNESILOCHUS. In what way distinct?

EURIPIDES. In this way. Formerly, when Ether separated the elements and bore the animals that were moving in her bosom, she wished to endow them with sight, and so made the eye round like the sun's disc and bored ears in the form of a funnel.

MNESILOCHUS. And because of this funnel I neither see nor hear. Ah! great gods! I am delighted to know it. What a fine thing it is to talk with wise men!

EURIPIDES. I will teach you many another thing of the sort.

MNESILOCHUS. That's well to know; but first of all I should like to find out how to grow lame, so that I need not have to follow you all about.

EURIPIDES. Come, hear and give heed!

MNESILOCHUS. I'm here and waiting.

EURIPIDES. Do you see that little door?

MNESILOCHUS. Yes, certainly.

EURIPIDES. Silence!

MNESILOCHUS. Silence about what? About the door?

EURIPIDES. Pay attention!

MNESILOCHUS. Pay attention and be silent about the door? Very well.

EURIPIDES. 'Tis there that Agathon, the celebrated tragic poet, dwells.

MNESILOCHUS. Who is this Agathon?

EURIPIDES. 'Tis a certain Agathon….

MNESILOCHUS. Swarthy, robust of build?

EURIPIDES. No, another. You have never seen him?

MNESILOCHUS. He has a big beard?

EURIPIDES. No, no, evidently you have never seen him.

MNESILOCHUS. Never, so far as I know.

EURIPIDES. And yet you have pedicated him. Well, it must have been without knowing who he was. Ah! let us step aside; here is one of his slaves bringing a brazier and some myrtle branches; no doubt he is going to offer a sacrifice and pray for a happy poetical inspiration for Agathon.

SERVANT OF AGATHON. Silence! oh, people! keep your mouths sedately shut! The chorus of the Muses is moulding songs at my master's hearth. Let the winds hold their breath in the silent Ether! Let the azure waves cease murmuring on the shore!…

MNESILOCHUS. Brououou! brououou! *(Imitates the buzzing of a fly.)*
EURIPIDES. Keep quiet! what are you saying there?

SERVANT. … Take your rest, ye winged races, and you, ye savage inhabitants of the woods, cease from your erratic wandering …

MNESILOCHUS. Broum, broum, brououou.

SERVANT. … for Agathon, our master, the sweet-voiced poet, is going …

MNESILOCHUS. … to be pedicated?

SERVANT. Whose voice is that?

MNESILOCHUS. 'Tis the silent Ether.

SERVANT. … is going to construct the framework of a drama. He is rounding fresh poetical forms, he is polishing them in the lathe and is welding them; he is hammering out sentences and metaphors; he is working up his subject like soft wax. First he models it and then he casts it in bronze …

MNESILOCHUS. … and sways his buttocks amorously.

SERVANT. Who is the rustic who approaches this sacred enclosure?

MNESILOCHUS. Take care of yourself and of your sweet-voiced poet! I have a strong instrument here both well rounded and well polished, which will pierce your enclosure and penetrate your bottom.

SERVANT. Old man, you must have been a very insolent fellow in your youth!

EURIPIDES *(to the servant)*. Let him be, friend, and, quick, go and call Agathon to me.

SERVANT. 'Tis not worth the trouble, for he will soon be here himself. He has

started to compose, and in winter it is never possible to round off strophes without coming to the sun to excite the imagination. *(He departs.)*
MNESILOCHUS. And what am I to do?

EURIPIDES. Wait till he comes…. Oh, Zeus! what hast thou in store for me to-day?

MNESILOCHUS. But, great gods, what is the matter then? What are you grumbling and groaning for? Tell me; you must not conceal anything from your father-in-law.

EURIPIDES. Some great misfortune is brewing against me.

MNESILOCHUS. What is it?

EURIPIDES. This day will decide whether it is all over with Euripides or not.

MNESILOCHUS. But how? Neither the tribunals nor the Senate are sitting, for it is the third of the five days consecrated to Demeter.

EURIPIDES. That is precisely what makes me tremble; the women have plotted my ruin, and to-day they are to gather in the Temple of Demeter to execute their decision.

MNESILOCHUS. Why are they against you?

EURIPIDES. Because I mishandle them in my tragedies.

MNESILOCHUS. By Posidon, you would seem to have thoroughly deserved your fate. But how are you going to get out of the mess?

EURIPIDES. I am going to beg Agathon, the tragic poet, to go to the Thesmophoria.

MNESILOCHUS. And what is he to do there?

EURIPIDES. He would mingle with the women, and stand up for me, if needful.

MNESILOCHUS. Would he be openly present or secretly?

EURIPIDES. Secretly, dressed in woman's clothes.

MNESILOCHUS. That's a clever notion, thoroughly worthy of you. The prize for trickery is ours.

EURIPIDES. Silence!

MNESILOCHUS. What's the matter?

EURIPIDES. Here comes Agathon.

MNESILOCHUS. Where, where?

EURIPIDES. That's the man they are bringing out yonder on the machine.

MNESILOCHUS. I am blind then! I see no man here, I only see Cyrené.

EURIPIDES. Be still! He is getting ready to sing.

MNESILOCHUS. What subtle trill, I wonder, is he going to warble to us?

AGATHON. Damsels, with the sacred torch in hand, unite your dance to shouts of joy in honour of the nether goddesses; celebrate the freedom of your country.

CHORUS. To what divinity is your homage addressed? I wish to mingle mine with it.

AGATHON. Oh! Muse! glorify Phoebus with his golden bow, who erected the walls of the city of the Simois.

CHORUS. To thee, oh Phoebus, I dedicate my most beauteous songs; to thee, the sacred victor in the poetical contests.

AGATHON. And praise Artemis too, the maiden huntress, who wanders on the mountains and through the woods….

CHORUS. I, in my turn, celebrate the everlasting happiness of the chaste Artemis, the mighty daughter of Latona!

AGATHON. … and Latona and the tones of the Asiatic lyre, which wed so well with the dances of the Phrygian Graces.

CHORUS. I do honour to the divine Latona and to the lyre, the mother of songs

of male and noble strains. The eyes of the goddess sparkle while listening to our enthusiastic chants. Honour to the powerful Phoebus! Hail! thou blessed son of Latona!

MNESILOCHUS. Oh! ye venerable Genetyllides, what tender and voluptuous songs! They surpass the most lascivious kisses in sweetness; I feel a thrill of delight pass up my rectum as I listen to them. Young man, whoever you are, answer my questions, which I am borrowing from Aeschylus' 'Lycurgeia.' Whence comes this effeminate? What is his country? his dress? What contradictions his life shows! A lyre and a hair-net! A wrestling school oil flask and a girdle! What could be more contradictory? What relation has a mirror to a sword? And you yourself, who are you? Do you pretend to be a man? Where is the sign of your manhood, your penis, pray? Where is the cloak, the footgear that belong to that sex? Are you a woman? Then where are your breasts? Answer me. But you keep silent. Oh! just as you choose; your songs display your character quite sufficiently.

AGATHON. Old man, old man, I hear the shafts of jealousy whistling by my ears, but they do not hit me. My dress is in harmony with my thoughts. A poet must adopt the nature of his characters. Thus, if he is placing women on the stage, he must contract all their habits in his own person.

MNESILOCHUS. Then you ride the high horse when you are composing a Phaedra.

AGATHON. If the heroes are men, everything in him will be manly. What we don't possess by nature, we must acquire by imitation.

MNESILOCHUS. When you are staging Satyrs, call me; I will do my best to help you from behind with standing tool.

AGATHON. Besides, it is bad taste for a poet to be coarse and hairy. Look at the famous Ibycus, at Anacreon of Teos, and at Alcaeus, who handled music so well; they wore headbands and found pleasure in the lascivious dances of Ionia. And have you not heard what a dandy Phrynichus was and how careful in his dress? For this reason his pieces were also beautiful, for the works of a poet are copied from himself.

MNESILOCHUS. Ah! so it is for this reason that Philocles, who is so hideous, writes hideous pieces; Xenocles, who is malicious, malicious ones, and

Theognis, who is cold, such cold ones?

AGATHON. Yes, necessarily and unavoidably; and ’tis because I knew this that I have so well cared for my person.

MNESILOCHUS. How, in the gods’ name?

EURIPIDES. Come, leave off badgering him; I was just the same at his age, when I began to write.

MNESILOCHUS. At! then, by Zeus! I don’t envy you your fine manners.

EURIPIDES *(to Agathon)*. But listen to the cause that brings me here.

AGATHON. Say on.

EURIPIDES. Agathon, wise is he who can compress many thoughts into few words. Struck by a most cruel misfortune, I come to you as a suppliant.

AGATHON. What are you asking?

EURIPIDES. The women purpose killing me to-day during the Thesmophoria, because I have dared to speak ill of them.

AGATHON. And what can I do for you in the matter?

EURIPIDES. Everything. Mingle secretly with the women by making yourself pass as one of themselves; then do you plead my cause with your own lips, and I am saved. You, and you alone, are capable of speaking of me worthily.

AGATHON. But why not go and defend yourself?

EURIPIDES. ’Tis impossible. First of all, I am known; further, I have white hair and a long beard; whereas you, you are good-looking, charming, and are close-shaven; you are fair, delicate, and have a woman’s voice.

AGATHON. Euripides!

EURIPIDES. Well?

AGATHON. Have you not said in one of your pieces, “You love to see the light,

and don’t you believe your father loves it too?”

EURIPIDES. Yes.

AGATHON. Then never you think I am going to expose myself in your stead; ’twould be madness. ’Tis for you to submit to the fate that overtakes you; one must not try to trick misfortune, but resign oneself to it with good grace.

MNESILOCHUS. This is why you, you wretch, offer your posterior with a good grace to lovers, not in words, but in actual fact.

EURIPIDES. But what prevents your going there?

AGATHON. I should run more risk than you would.

EURIPIDES. Why?

AGATHON. Why? I should look as if I were wanting to trespass on secret nightly pleasures of the women and to ravish their Aphrodité.

MNESILOCHUS. Of wanting to ravish indeed! you mean wanting to be ravished — in the rearward mode. Ah! great gods! a fine excuse truly!

EURIPIDES. Well then, do you agree?

AGATHON. Don’t count upon it.

EURIPIDES. Oh! I am unfortunate indeed! I am undone!

MNESILOCHUS. Euripides, my friend, my son-in-law, never despair.

EURIPIDES. What can be done?

MNESILOCHUS. Send him to the devil and do with me as you like.

EURIPIDES. Very well then, since you devote yourself to my safety, take off your cloak first.

MNESILOCHUS. There, it lies on the ground. But what do you want to do with me?

EURIPIDES. To shave off this beard of yours, and to remove your hair below as well.

MNESILOCHUS. Do what you think fit; I yield myself entirely to you.

EURIPIDES. Agathon, you have always razors about you; lend me one.

AGATHON. Take if yourself, there, out of that case.

EURIPIDES. Thanks. Sit down and puff out the right cheek.

MNESILOCHUS. Oh! oh! oh!

EURIPIDES. What are you shouting for? I'll cram a spit down your gullet, if you're not quiet.

MNESILOCHUS. Oh! oh! oh! oh! oh! oh! *(He springs up and starts running away.)* EURIPIDES. Where are you running to now?

MNESILOCHUS. To the temple of the Eumenides. No, by Demeter I won't let myself be gashed like that.

EURIPIDES. But you will get laughed at, with your face half-shaven like that.

MNESILOCHUS. Little care I.

EURIPIDES. In the gods' names, don't leave me in the lurch. Come here.

MNESILOCHUS. Oh! by the gods! *(Resumes his seat.)*

EURIPIDES. Keep still and hold up your head. Why do you want to fidget about like this?

MNESILOCHUS. Mu, mu.

EURIPIDES. Well! why, mu, mu? There! 'tis done and well done too!

MNESILOCHUS Ah! great god! It makes me feel quite light.

EURIPIDES. Don't worry yourself; you look charming. Do you want to see yourself?

MNESILOCHUS. Aye, that I do; hand the mirror here.

EURIPIDES. Do you see yourself?

MNESILOCHUS. But this is not I, it is Clisthenes!

EURIPIDES. Stand up; I am now going to remove your hair. Bend down.

MNESILOCHUS. Alas! alas! they are going to grill me like a pig.

EURIPIDES. Come now, a torch or a lamp! Bend down and take care of the tender end of your tail!

MNESILOCHUS. Aye, aye! but I'm afire! oh! oh! Water, water, neighbour, or my rump will be alight!

EURIPIDES. Keep up your courage!

MNESILOCHUS. Keep my courage, when I'm being burnt up?

EURIPIDES. Come, cease your whining, the worst is over.

MNESILOCHUS. Oh! it's quite black, all burnt below there all about the hole!

EURIPIDES. Don't worry! that will be washed off with a sponge.

MNESILOCHUS. Woe to him who dares to wash my rump!

EURIPIDES. Agathon, you refuse to devote yourself to helping me; but at any rate lend me a tunic and a belt. You cannot say you have not got them.

AGATHON. Take them and use them as you like; I consent.

MNESILOCHUS. What must be taken?

EURIPIDES. What must be taken? First put on this long saffron-coloured robe.

MNESILOCHUS. By Aphrodité! what a sweet odour! how it smells of a man's genitals! Hand it me quickly. And the belt?

EURIPIDES. Here it is.

MNESILOCHUS. Now some rings for my legs.

EURIPIDES. You still want a hair-net and a head-dress.

AGATHON. Here is my night-cap.

EURIPIDES. Ah! that's capital.

MNESILOCHUS. Does it suit me?

AGATHON. It could not be better.

EURIPIDES. And a short mantle?

AGATHON. There's one on the couch; take it.

EURIPIDES. He wants slippers.

AGATHON. Here are mine.

MNESILOCHUS. Will they fit me? You like a loose fit.

AGATHON. Try them on. Now that you have all you need, let me be taken inside.

EURIPIDES. You look for all the world like a woman. But when you talk, take good care to give your voice a woman's tone.

MNESILOCHUS. I'll try my best.

EURIPIDES. Come, get yourself to the temple.

MNESILOCHUS. No, by Apollo, not unless you swear to me …

EURIPIDES. What?

MNESILOCHUS. … that, if anything untoward happen to me, you will leave nothing undone to save me.

EURIPIDES Very well! I swear it by the Ether, the dwelling-place of the king of the gods.

MNESILOCHUS. Why not rather swear it by the disciples of Hippocrates?

EURIPIDES. Come, I swear it by all the gods, both great and small.

MNESILOCHUS. Remember, 'tis the heart, and not the tongue, that has sworn; for the oaths of the tongue concern me but little.

EURIPIDES. Hurry yourself! The signal for the meeting has just been displayed on the Temple of Demeter. Farewell. [*Exit.*

MNESILOCHUS. Here, Thratta, follow me. Look, Thratta, at the cloud of smoke that arises from all these lighted torches. Ah! beautiful Thesmophorae! grant me your favours, protect me, both within the temple and on my way back! Come, Thratta, put down the basket and take out the cake, which I wish to offer to the two goddesses. Mighty divinity, oh, Demeter, and thou, Persephoné, grant that I may be able to offer you many sacrifices; above all things, grant that I may not be recognized. Would that my young daughter might marry a man as rich as he is foolish and silly, so that she may have nothing to do but amuse herself. But where can a place be found for hearing well? Be off, Thratta, be off; slaves have no right to be present at this gathering.

HERALD. Silence! Silence! Pray to the Thesmophorae, Demeter and Cora; pray to Plutus, Calligenia, Curotrophos, the Earth, Hermes and the Graces, that all may happen for the best at this gathering, both for the greatest advantage of Athens and for our own personal happiness! May the award be given her, who, by both deeds and words, has most deserved it from the Athenian people and from the women! Address these prayers to heaven and demand happiness for yourselves. Io Paean! Io Paean! Let us rejoice!

CHORUS. May the gods deign to accept our vows and our prayers! Oh! almighty Zeus, and thou, god with the golden lyre, who reignest on sacred Delos, and thou, oh, invincible virgin, Pallas, with the eyes of azure and the spear of gold, who protectest our illustrious city, and thou, the daughter of the beautiful Latona, the queen of the forests, who art adored under many names, hasten hither at my call. Come, thou mighty Posidon, king of the Ocean, leave thy stormy whirlpools of Nereus; come goddesses of the seas, come, ye nymphs, who wander on the mountains. Let us unite our voices to the sounds of the golden lyre, and may wisdom preside at the gathering of the noble matrons of

Athens.

HERALD. Address your prayers to the gods and goddesses of Olympus, of Delphi, Delos and all other places; if there be a man who is plotting against the womenfolk or who, to injure them, is proposing peace to Euripides and the Medes, or who aspires to usurping the tyranny, plots the return of a tyrant, or unmasks a supposititious child; or if there be a slave who, a confidential party to a wife's intrigues, reveals them secretly to her husband, or who, entrusted with a message, does not deliver the same faithfully; if there be a lover who fulfils naught of what he has promised a woman, whom he has abused on the strength of his lies, if there be an old woman who seduces the lover of a maiden by dint of her presents and treacherously receives him in her house; if there be a host or hostess who sells false measure, pray the gods that they will overwhelm them with their wrath, both them and their families, and that they may reserve all their favours for you.

CHORUS. Let us ask the fulfilment of these wishes both for the city and for the people, and may the wisest of us cause her opinion to be accepted. But woe to those women who break their oaths, who speculate on the public misfortune, who seek to alter the laws and the decrees, who reveal our secrets to the foe and admit the Medes into our territory so that they may devastate it! I declare them both impious and criminal. Oh! almighty Zeus! see to it that the gods protect us, albeit we are but women!

HERALD. Hearken, all of you! this is the decree passed by the Senate of the Women under the presidency of Timoclea and at the suggestion of Sostrata; it is signed by Lysilla, the secretary: "There will be a gathering of the people on the morning of the third day of the Thesmophoria, which is a day of rest for us; the principal business there shall be the punishment that it is meet to inflict upon Euripides for the insults with which he has loaded us." Now who asks to speak?

FIRST WOMAN. I do.

HERALD. First put on this garland, and then speak. Silence! let all be quiet! Pay attention! for here she is spitting as orators generally do before they begin; no doubt she has much to say.

FIRST WOMAN. If I have asked to speak, may the goddesses bear me witness, it was not for sake of ostentation. But I have long been pained to see us women

insulted by this Euripides, this son of the green-stuff woman, who loads us with every kind of indignity. Has he not hit us enough, calumniated us sufficiently, wherever there are spectators, tragedians, and a chorus? Does he not style us gay, lecherous, drunken, traitorous, boastful? Does he not repeat that we are all vice, that we are the curse of our husbands? So that, directly they come back from the theatre, they look at us doubtfully and go searching every nook, fearing there may be some hidden lover. We can do nothing as we used to, so many are the false ideas which he has instilled into our husbands. Is a woman weaving a garland for herself? 'Tis because she is in love. Does she let some vase drop while going or returning to the house? her husband asks her in whose honour she has broken it, "It can only be for that Corinthian stranger." Is a maiden unwell? Straightway her brother says, "That is a colour that does not please me." And if a childless woman wishes to substitute one, the deceit can no longer be a secret, for the neighbours will insist on being present at her delivery. Formerly the old men married young girls, but they have been so calumniated that none think of them now, thanks to the verse: "A woman is the tyrant of the old man who marries her." Again, it is because of Euripides that we are incessantly watched, that we are shut up behind bolts and bars, and that dogs are kept to frighten off the gallants. Let that pass; but formerly it was we who had the care of the food, who fetched the flour from the storeroom, the oil and the wine; we can do it no more. Our husbands now carry little Spartan keys on their persons, made with three notches and full of malice and spite. Formerly it sufficed to purchase a ring marked with the same sign for three obols, to open the most securely sealed-up door; but now this pestilent Euripides has taught men to hang seals of worm-eaten wood about their necks. My opinion, therefore, is that we should rid ourselves of our enemy by poison or by any other means, provided he dies. That is what I announce publicly; as to certain points, which I wish to keep secret, I propose to record them on the secretary's minutes.

CHORUS. Never have I listened to a cleverer or more eloquent woman. Everything she says is true; she has examined the matter from all sides and has weighed up every detail. Her arguments are close, varied, and happily chosen. I believe that Xenocles himself, the son of Carcinus, would seem to talk mere nonsense, if placed beside her.

SECOND WOMAN. I have only a very few words to add, for the last speaker has covered the various points of the indictment; allow me only to tell you what happened to me. My husband died at Cyprus, leaving me five children, whom I had great trouble to bring up by weaving chaplets on the myrtle market.

Anyhow, I lived as well as I could until this wretch had persuaded the spectators by his tragedies that there were no gods; since then I have not sold as many chaplets by half. I charge you therefore and exhort you all to punish him, for does he not deserve it in a thousand respects, he who loads you with troubles, who is as coarse toward you as the green-stuff upon which his mother reared him? But I must back to the market to weave my chaplets; I have twenty to deliver yet.

CHORUS. This is even more animated and more trenchant than the first speech; all she has just said is full of good sense and to the point; it is clever, clear and well calculated to convince. Yes! we must have striking vengeance on the insults of Euripides.

MNESILOCHUS. Oh, women! I am not astonished at these outbursts of fiery rage; how could your bile not get inflamed against Euripides, who has spoken so ill of you? As for myself, I hate the man, I swear it by my children; 'twould be madness not to hate him! Yet, let us reflect a little; we are alone and our words will not be repeated outside. Why be so bent on his ruin? Because he has known and shown up two or three of our faults, when we have a thousand? As for myself, not to speak of other women, I have more than one great sin upon my conscience, but this is the blackest of them. I had been married three days and my husband was asleep by my side; I had a lover, who had seduced me when I was seven years old; impelled by his passion, he came scratching at the door; I understood at once he was there and was going down noiselessly. "Where are you going?" asked my husband. "I am suffering terribly with colic," I told him, "and am going to the closet." "Go," he replied, and started pounding together juniper berries, aniseed, and sage. As for myself, I moistened the door-hinge and went to find my lover, who embraced me, half-reclining upon Apollo's altar and holding on to the sacred laurel with one hand. Well now! Consider! that is a thing of which Euripides has never spoken. And when we bestow our favours on slaves and muleteers for want of better, does he mention this? And when we eat garlic early in the morning after a night of wantonness, so that our husband, who has been keeping guard upon the city wall, may be reassured by the smell and suspect nothing, has Euripides ever breathed a word of this? Tell me. Neither has he spoken of the woman who spreads open a large cloak before her husband's eyes to make him admire it in full daylight to conceal her lover by so doing and afford him the means of making his escape. I know another, who for ten whole days pretended to be suffering the pains of labour until she had secured a child; the husband hurried in all directions to buy drugs to hasten her deliverance, and

meanwhile an old woman brought the infant in a stew-pot; to prevent its crying she had stopped up its mouth with honey. With a sign she told the wife that she was bringing a child for her, who at once began exclaiming, “Go away, friend, go away, I think I am going to be delivered; I can feel him kicking his heels in the belly … of the stew-pot.” The husband goes off full of joy, and the old wretch quickly picks the honey out of the child’s mouth, which sets a-crying; then she seizes the babe, runs to the father and tells him with a smile on her face, “’Tis a lion, a lion, that is born to you; ’tis your very image. Everything about it is like you, even to its little tool, which is all twisty like a fir-cone.” Are these not our everyday tricks? Why certainly, by Artemis, and we are angry with Euripides, who assuredly treats us no worse than we deserve!

CHORUS. Great gods! where has she unearthed all that? What country gave birth to such an audacious woman? Oh! you wretch! I should not have thought ever a one of us could have spoken in public with such impudence. ’Tis clear, however, that we must expect everything and, as the old proverb says, must look beneath every stone, lest it conceal some orator ready to sting us. There is but one thing in the world worse than a shameless woman, and that’s another woman.

THIRD WOMAN. By Aglaurus! you have lost your wits, friends! You must be bewitched to suffer this plague to belch forth insults against us all. Is there no one has any spirit at all? If not, we and our maid-servants will punish her. Run and fetch coals and let’s depilate her cunt in proper style, to teach her not to speak ill of her sex.

MNESILOCHUS. Oh! no! have mercy, friends. Have we not the right to speak frankly at this gathering? And because I have uttered what I thought right in favour of Euripides, do you want to depilate me for my trouble?

THIRD WOMAN. What! we ought not to punish you, who alone have dared to defend the man who has done us so much harm, whom it pleases to put all the vile women that ever were upon the stage, who only shows us Melanippés Phaedras? But of Penelopé he has never said a word, because she was reputed chaste and good.

MNESILOCHUS. I know the reason. ’Tis because not a single Penelopé exists among the women of to-day, but all without exception are Phaedras.

THIRD WOMAN. Women, you hear how this creature still dares to speak of us all.

MNESILOCHUS. And, ‘faith, I have not said all that I know. Do you want any more?

THIRD WOMAN. You cannot tell us any more; you have emptied your bag.

MNESILOCHUS. Why, I have not told the thousandth part of what we women do. Have I said how we use the hollow handles of our brooms to draw up wine unbeknown to our husbands.

THIRD WOMAN. The cursed jade!

MNESILOCHUS. And how we give meats to our lovers at the feast of the Apaturia and then accuse the cat….

THIRD WOMAN. She’s mad!

MNESILOCHUS. … Have I mentioned the woman who killed her husband with a hatchet? Of another, who caused hers to lose his reason with her potions? And of the Acharnian woman …

THIRD WOMAN. Die, you bitch!

MNESILOCHUS. … who buried her father beneath the bath?

THIRD WOMAN. And yet we listen to such things?

MNESILOCHUS. Have I told how you attributed to yourself the male child your slave had just borne and gave her your little daughter?

THIRD WOMAN. This insult calls for vengeance. Look out for your hair!

MNESILOCHUS. By Zeus! don’t touch me.

THIRD WOMAN. There!

MNESILOCHUS. There! tit for tat! *(They exchange blows.)*

THIRD WOMAN. Hold my cloak, Philista!

MNESILOCHUS. Come on then, and by Demeter …

THIRD WOMAN. Well! what?

MNESILOCHUS. … I'll make you disgorge the sesame-cake you have eaten.

CHORUS. Cease wrangling! I see a woman running here in hot haste.
Keep silent, so that we may hear the better what she has to say.

CLISTHENES. Friends, whom I copy in all things, my hairless chin sufficiently evidences how dear you are to me; I am women-mad and make myself their champion wherever I am. Just now on the market-place I heard mention of a thing that is of the greatest importance to you; I come to tell it you, to let you know it, so that you may watch carefully and be on your guard against the danger which threatens you.

CHORUS. What is it, my child? I can well call you child, for you have so smooth a skin.

CLISTHENES. 'Tis said that Euripides has sent an old man here to-day, one of his relations …

CHORUS. With what object? What is his purpose?

CLISTHENES. … so that he may hear your speeches and inform him of your deliberations and intentions.

CHORUS. But how would a man fail to be recognized amongst women?

CLISTHENES. Euripides singed and depilated him and disguised him as a woman.

MNESILOCHUS. This is pure invention! What man is fool enough to let himself be depilated? As for myself, I don't believe a word of it.

CLISTHENES. Are you mad? I should not have come here to tell you, if I did not know it on indisputable authority.

CHORUS. Great gods! what is it you tell us! Come, women, let us not lose a moment; let us search and rummage everywhere! Where can this man have

hidden himself escape our notice? Help us to look, Clisthenes; we shall thus owe you double thanks, dear friend.

CLISTHENES *(to a fourth woman)*. Well then! let us see. To begin with you; who are you?

MNESILOCHUS *(aside)*. Wherever am I to stow myself?

CLISTHENES. Each and every one must pass the scrutiny.

MNESILOCHUS *(aside)*. Oh! great gods!

FOURTH WOMAN. You ask me who I am? I am the wife of Cleonymus.

CLISTHENES. Do you know this woman?

CHORUS. Yes, yes, pass on to the rest.

CLISTHENES. And she who carries the child?

MNESILOCHUS *(aside)*. I'm a dead man. *(He runs off.)* CLISTHENES *(to Mnesilochus)*. Hi! you there! where are you off to? Stop there. What are you running away for?

MNESILOCHUS. I want to relieve myself.

CLISTHENES. The shameless thing! Come, hurry yourself; I will wait here for you.

CHORUS. Wait for her and examine her closely; 'tis the only one we do not know.

CLISTHENES. You are a long time about your business.

MNESILOCHUS. Aye, my god, yes; 'tis because I am unwell, for I ate cress yesterday.

CLISTHENES. What are you chattering about cress? Come here and be quick.

MNESILOCHUS. Oh! don't pull a poor sick woman about like that.

CLISTHENES. Tell me, who is your husband?

MNESILOCHUS. My husband? Do you know a certain individual at Cothocidae…?

CLISTHENES. Whom do you mean? Give his name.

MNESILOCHUS. 'Tis an individual to whom the son of a certain individual one day….

CLISTHENES. You are drivelling! Let's see, have you ever been here before?

MNESILOCHUS. Why certainly, every year.

CLISTHENES. Who is your tent companion?

MNESILOCHUS. 'Tis a certain…. Oh! my god!

CLISTHENES. You don't answer.

FIFTH WOMAN. Withdraw, all of you; I am going to examine her thoroughly about last year's mysteries. But move away, Clisthenes, for no man may hear what is going to be said. Now answer my questions! What was done first?

MNESILOCHUS. Let's see then. What was done first? Oh! we drank.

FIFTH WOMAN. And then?

MNESILOCHUS. We drank to our healths.

FIFTH WOMAN. You will have heard that from someone. And then?

MNESILOCHUS. Xenylla relieved herself in a cup, for there was no other vessel.

FIFTH WOMAN. You trifle. Here, Clisthenes, here! This is the man of whom you spoke.

CLISTHENES. What is to be done then?

FIFTH WOMAN. Take off his clothes, I can get nothing out of him.

MNESILOCHUS. What! are you going to strip a mother of nine children naked?

CLISTHENES. Come, undo your girdle, you shameless thing.

FIFTH WOMAN. Ah! what a sturdy frame! but she has no breasts like we have.

MNESILOCHUS. That's because I'm barren. I never had any children.

FIFTH WOMAN. Oh! indeed! just now you were the mother of nine.

CLISTHENES. Stand up straight. Hullo! what do I see there? Why, a penis sticking out behind.

FIFTH WOMAN. There's no mistaking it; you can see it projecting, and a fine red it is.

CLISTHENES. Where has it gone to now?

FIFTH WOMAN. To the front.

CLISTHENES. No.

FIFTH WOMAN. Ah! 'tis behind now.

CLISTHENES. Why, friend, 'tis for all the world like the Isthmus; you keep pulling your tool backwards and forwards just as the Corinthians do their ships.

FIFTH WOMAN. Ah! the wretch! this is why he insulted us and defended Euripides.

MNESILOCHUS. Aye, wretch indeed, what troubles have I not got into now!

FIFTH WOMAN. What shall we do?

CLISTHENES. Watch him closely, so that he does not escape. As for me, I go to report the matter to the magistrates, the Prytanes.

CHORUS. Let us kindle our lamps; let us go firmly to work and with courage, let us take off our cloaks and search whether some other man has not come here too; let us pass round the whole Pnyx, examine the tents and the passages. Come, be quick, let us start off on a light toe and rummage all round in silence.

Let us hasten, let us finish our round as soon as possible. Look quickly for the traces that might show you a man hidden here, let your glance fall on every side; look well to the right and to the left. If we seize some impious fellow, woe to him! He will know how we punish the outrage, the crime, the sacrilege. The criminal will then acknowledge at last that gods exist; his fate will teach all men that the deities must be revered, that justice must be observed and that they must submit to the sacred laws. If not, then woe to them! Heaven itself will punish sacrilege; being aflame with fury and mad with frenzy, all their deeds will prove to mortals, both men and women, that the deity punishes injustice and impiety, and that she is not slow to strike. But I think I have now searched everywhere and that no other man is hidden among us.

SIXTH WOMAN. Where is he flying to? Stop him! stop him! Ah! miserable woman that I am, he has torn my child from my breast and has disappeared with it.

MNESILOCHUS. Scream as loud as you will, but he shall never suck your bosom more. If you do not let me go this very instant, I am going to cut open the veins of his thighs with this cutlass and his blood shall flow over the altar.

SIXTH WOMAN. Oh! great gods! oh! friends, help me! terrify him with your shrieks, triumph over this monster, permit him not to rob me of my only child.

CHORUS. Oh! oh! venerable Parcae, what fresh attack is this? ’Tis the crowning act of audacity and shamelessness! What has he done now, friends, what has he done?

MNESILOCHUS. Ah! this insolence passes all bounds, but I shall know how to curb it.

CHORUS. What a shameful deed! the measure of his iniquities is full!

SIXTH WOMAN. Aye, ’tis shameful that he should have robbed me of my child.

CHORUS. ’Tis past belief to be so criminal and so impudent!

MNESILOCHUS. Ah! you’re not near the end of it yet.

SIXTH WOMAN. Little I care whence you come; you shall not return to boast

of having acted so odiously with impunity, for you shall be punished.

MNESILOCHUS. You won't do it, by the gods!

CHORUS. And what immortal would protect you for your crime?

MNESILOCHUS. 'Tis in vain you talk! I shall not let go the child.

CHORUS. By the goddesses, you will not laugh presently over your crime and your impious speech. For with impiety, as 'tis meet, shall we reply to your impiety. Soon fortune will turn round and overwhelm you. Come! bring wood along. Let us burn the wretch, let us roast him as quickly as possible.

SIXTH WOMAN. Bring faggots, Mania! *(To Mnesilochus.)* You will be mere charcoal soon.

CHORUS. Grill away, roast me, but you, my child, take off this Cretan robe and blame no one but your mother for your death. But what does this mean? The little girl is nothing but a skin filled with wine and shod with Persian slippers. Oh! you wanton, you tippling woman, who think of nothing but wine; you are a fortune to the drinking-shops and are our ruin; for the sake of drink, you neglect both your household and your shuttle!

SIXTH WOMAN. Faggots, Mania, plenty of them.

MNESILOCHUS. Bring as many as you like. But answer me; are you the mother of this brat?

SIXTH WOMAN. I carried it ten months.

MNESILOCHUS. You carried it?

SIXTH WOMAN. I swear it by Artemis.

MNESILOCHUS. How much does it hold? Three cotylae? Tell me.

SIXTH WOMAN. Oh! what have you done? You have stripped the poor child quite naked, and it is so small, so small.

MNESILOCHUS. So small?

SIXTH WOMAN. Yes, quite small, to be sure.

MNESILOCHUS. How old is it? Has it seen the feast of cups thrice or four times?

SIXTH WOMAN. It was born about the time of the last Dionysia. But give it back to me.

MNESILOCHUS. No, may Apollo bear me witness.

SIXTH WOMAN. Well, then we are going to burn him.

MNESILOCHUS. Burn me, but then I shall rip this open instantly.

SIXTH WOMAN. No, no, I adjure you, don't; do anything you like to me rather than that.

MNESILOCHUS. What a tender mother you are; but nevertheless I shall rip it open. *(Tears open the wine-skin.)* SIXTH WOMAN. Oh, my beloved daughter! Mania, hand me the sacred cup, that
I may at least catch the blood of my child.

MNESILOCHUS. Hold it below; 'tis the sole favour I grant you.

SIXTH WOMAN. Out upon you, you pitiless monster!

MNESILOCHUS. This robe belongs to the priestess.

SIXTH WOMAN. What belongs to the priestess?

MNESILOCHUS. Here, take it. *(Throws her the Cretan robe.)*

SEVENTH WOMAN. Ah! unfortunate Mica! who has robbed you of your daughter, your beloved child?

SIXTH WOMAN. That wretch. But as you are here, watch him well, while I go with Clisthenes to the Prytanes and denounce him for his crimes.

MNESILOCHUS. Ah! how can I secure safety? what device can I hit on? what can I think of? He whose fault it is, he who hurried me into this trouble, will not come to my rescue. Let me see, whom could I best send to him? Ha! I know a

means taken from Palamedes; like him, I will write my misfortune on some oars, which I will cast into the sea. But there are no oars here. Where might I find some? Where indeed? Bah! what if I took these statues instead of oars, wrote upon them and then threw them towards this side and that. 'Tis the best thing to do. Besides, like oars they are of wood. Oh! my hands, keep up your courage, for my safety is at stake. Come, my beautiful tablets, receive the traces of my stylus and be the messengers of my sorry fate. Oh! oh! this B looks miserable enough! Where is it running to then? Come, off with you in all directions, to the right and to the left; and hurry yourselves, for there's much need indeed!

CHORUS. Let us address ourselves to the spectators to sing our praises, despite the fact that each one says much ill of women. If the men are to be believed, we are a plague to them; through us come all their troubles, quarrels, disputes, sedition, griefs and wars. But if we are truly such a pest, why marry us? Why forbid us to go out or show ourselves at the window? You want to keep this pest, and take a thousand cares to do it. If your wife goes out and you meet her away from the house, you fly into a fury. Ought you not rather to rejoice and give thanks to the gods? for if the pest has disappeared, you will no longer find it at home. If we fall asleep at friends' houses from the fatigue of playing and sporting, each of you comes prowling round the bed to contemplate the features of this pest. If we seat ourselves at the window, each one wants to see the pest, and if we withdraw through modesty, each wants all the more to see the pest perch herself there again. It is thus clear that we are better than you, and the proof of this is easy. Let us find out which is worse of the two sexes. We say, "'Tis you," while you aver, 'tis we. Come, let us compare them in detail, each individual man with a woman. Charminus is not equal to Nausimaché, that's certain. Cleophon is in every respect inferior to Salabaccho. 'Tis long now since any of you has dared to contest the prize with Aristomaché, the heroine of Marathon, or with Stratonicé.

Among the last year's Senators, who have just yielded their office to other citizens, is there one who equals Eubulé? Therefore we maintain that men are greatly our inferiors. You see no woman who has robbed the State of fifty talents rushing about the city in a magnificent chariot; our greatest peculations are a measure of corn, which we steal from our husbands, and even then we return it them the very same day. But we could name many amongst you who do quite as much, and who are, even more than ourselves, gluttons, parasites, cheats and kidnappers of slaves. We know how to keep our property better than you. We still have our cylinders, our beams, our baskets and our sunshades; whereas

many among you have lost the wood of your spears as well as the iron, and many others have cast away their bucklers on the battlefield.

There are many reproaches we have the right to bring against men. The most serious is this, that the woman, who has given birth to a useful citizen, whether taxiarch or strategus should receive some distinction; a place of honour should be reserved for her at the Sthenia, the Scirophoria, and the other festivals that we keep. On the other hand, she of whom a coward was born or a worthless man, a bad trierarch or an unskilful pilot, should sit with shaven head, behind her sister who had borne a brave man. Oh! citizens! is it just, that the mother of Hyperbolus should sit dressed in white and with loosened tresses beside that of Lamachus and lend out money on usury? He, who may have done a deal of this nature with her, so far from paying her interest, should not even repay the capital, saying, "What, pay you interest? after you have given us this delightful son?"

MNESILOCHUS. I have contracted quite a squint by looking round for him, and yet Euripides does not come. Who is keeping him? No doubt he is ashamed of his cold Palamedes. What will attract him? Let us see! By which of his pieces does he set most store? Ah! I'll imitate his Helen, his lastborn. I just happen to have a complete woman's outfit.

SEVENTH WOMAN. What are you ruminating over now again? Why are you rolling up your eyes? You'll have no reason to be proud of your Helen, if you don't keep quiet until one of the Prytanes arrives.

MNESILOCHUS *(as Helen)*. "These shores are those of the Nile with the beautiful nymphs, these waters take the place of heaven's rain and fertilize the white earth, that produces the black syrmea."

SEVENTH WOMAN. By bright Hecaté, you're a cunning varlet.

MNESILOCHUS. "Glorious Sparta is my country and Tyndareus is my father."

SEVENTH WOMAN. He your father, you rascal! Why, 'tis Phrynondas.

MNESILOCHUS. "I was given the name of Helen."

SEVENTH WOMAN. What! you are again becoming a woman, before we have punished you for having pretended it a first time!

MNESILOCHUS. “A thousand warriors have died on my account on the banks of the Scamander.”

SEVENTH WOMAN. Why have you not done the same?

MNESILOCHUS. “And here I am upon these shores; Menelaus, my unhappy husband, does not yet come. Ah! how life weighs upon me! Oh! ye cruel crows, who have not devoured my body! But what sweet hope is this that sets my heart a-throb? Oh, Zeus! grant it may not prove a lying one!”

EURIPIDES *(as Menelaus)*. “To what master does this splendid palace belong? Will he welcome strangers who have been tried on the billows of the sea by storm and shipwreck?”

MNESILOCHUS. “This is the palace of Proteus.”

EURIPIDES. “Of what Proteus?”

SEVENTH WOMAN. Oh! the thrice cursed rascal! how he lies! By the goddesses, ’tis ten years since Proteas died.

EURIPIDES. “What is this shore whither the wind has driven our boat?”

MNESILOCHUS. “It’s Egypt.”

EURIPIDES. “Alas! how far we are from our own country!”

SEVENTH WOMAN. But don’t believe that cursed fool. This is Demeter’s Temple.

EURIPIDES. “Is Proteus in these parts?”

SEVENTH WOMAN. Ah, now, stranger, it must be sea-sickness that makes you so distraught! You have been told that Proteas is dead, and yet you ask if he is in these parts.

EURIPIDES. “He is no more! Oh! woe! where lie his ashes?”

MNESILOCHUS. ’Tis on his tomb you see me sitting.

SEVENTH WOMAN. You call an altar a tomb! Beware of the rope!

EURIPIDES. “And why remain sitting on this tomb, wrapped in this long veil, oh, stranger lady?”

MNESILOCHUS. “They want to force me to marry a son of Proteus.”

SEVENTH WOMAN. Ah! wretch, why tell such shameful lies? Stranger, this is a rascal who has slipped in amongst us women to rob us of our trinkets.

MNESILOCHUS *(to Seventh Woman)* “Shout! load me with your insults, for little care I.”

EURIPIDES. “Who is the old woman who reviles you, stranger lady?”

MNESILOCHUS. “’Tis Theonoé, the daughter of Proteus.”

SEVENTH WOMAN. I! Why, my name’s Critylla, the daughter of Antitheus, of the deme of Gargettus; as for you, you are a rogue.

MNESILOCHUS. “Your entreaties are vain. Never shall I wed your brother; never shall I betray the faith I owe my husband Menelaus, who is fighting before Troy.”

EURIPIDES. “What are you saying? Turn your face towards me.”

MNESILOCHUS. “I dare not; my cheeks show the marks of the insults I have been forced to suffer.”

EURIPIDES “Oh! great gods! I cannot speak, for very emotion…. Ah! what do I see? Who are you?”

MNESILOCHUS. “And you, what is your name? for my surprise is as great as yours.”

EURIPIDES. “Are you Grecian or born in this country?”

MNESILOCHUS. “I am Grecian. But now your name, what is it?”

EURIPIDES. “Oh! how you resemble Helen!”

MNESILOCHUS. And you Menelaus, if I can judge by those pot-herbs.

EURIPIDES. “You are not mistaken, ’tis that unfortunate mortal who stands before you.”

MNESILOCHUS. “Ah! how you have delayed coming to your wife’s arms! Press me to your heart, throw your arms about me, for I wish to cover you with kisses. Carry me away, carry me away, quick, quick, far, very far from here.”

SEVENTH WOMAN. By the goddesses, woe to him who would carry you away! I should thrash him with my torch.

EURIPIDES. “Do you propose to prevent me from taking my wife, the daughter of Tyndareus, to Sparta?”

SEVENTH WOMAN You seem to me to be a cunning rascal too; you are in collusion with this man, and ’twas not for nothing that you kept babbling about Egypt. But the hour for punishment has come; here is the magistrate come with his archer.

EURIPIDES. This grows awkward. Let me hide myself.

MNESILOCHUS. And what is to become of me, poor unfortunate man?

EURIPIDES. Be at ease. I shall never abandon you, as long as I draw breath and one of my numberless artifices remains untried.

MNESILOCHUS. The fish has not bitten this time.

THE PRYTANIS. Is this the rascal of whom Clisthenes told us? Why are you trying to make yourself so small? Archer, arrest him, fasten him to the post, then take up your position there and keep guard over him. Let none approach him. A sound lash with your whip for him who attempts to break the order.

SEVENTH WOMAN. Excellent, for just now a rogue almost took him from me.

MNESILOCHUS. Prytanis, in the name of that hand which you know so well how to bend, when money is placed in it, grant me a slight favour before I die.

PRYTANIS. What favour?

MNESILOCHUS. Order the archer to strip me before lashing me to the post; the

crows, when they make their meal on the poor old man, would laugh too much at this robe and head-dress.

PRYTANIS. ’Tis in that gear that you must be exposed by order of the Senate, so that your crime may be patent to the passers-by.

MNESILOCHUS. Oh! cursed robe, the cause of all my misfortune! My last hope is thus destroyed!

CHORUS. Let us now devote ourselves to the sports which the women are accustomed to celebrate here, when time has again brought round the mighty Mysteries of the great goddesses, the sacred days which Pauson himself honours by fasting and would wish feast to succeed feast, that he might keep them all holy. Spring forward with a light step, whirling in mazy circles; let your hands interlace, let the eager and rapid dancers sway to the music and glance on every side as they move. Let the chorus sing likewise and praise the Olympian gods in their pious transport.

’Tis wrong to suppose that, because I am a woman and in this Temple, I am going to speak ill of men; but since we want something fresh, we are going through the rhythmic steps of the round dance for the first time.

Start off while you sing to the god of the lyre and to the chaste goddess armed with the bow. Hail! thou god who flingest thy darts so far, grant us the victory! The homage of our song is also due to Heré, the goddess of marriage, who interests herself in every chorus and guards the approach to the nuptial couch. I also pray Hermes, the god of the shepherds, and Pan and the beloved Graces to bestow a benevolent smile upon our songs.

Let us lead off anew, let us double our zeal during our solemn days, and especially let us observe a close fast; let us form fresh measures that keep good time, and may our songs resound to the very heavens. Do thou, oh divine Bacchus, who art crowned with ivy, direct our chorus; ’tis to thee that both my hymns and my dances are dedicated; oh, Evius, oh, Bromius, oh, thou son of Semelé, oh, Bacchus, who delightest to mingle with the dear choruses of the nymphs upon the mountains, and who repeatest, while dancing with them, the sacred hymn, Evius, Evius, Evoe. Echo, the nymph of Cithaeron returns thy words, which resound beneath the dark vaults of the thick foliage and in the midst of the rocks of the forest; the ivy enlaces thy brow with its tendrils charged

with flowers.

SCYTHIAN ARCHER. You shall stay here in the open air to wail.

MNESILOCHUS. Archer, I adjure you.

SCYTHIAN. ’Tis labour lost.

MNESILOCHUS. Loosen the wedge a little.

SCYTHIAN. Aye, certainly.

MNESILOCHUS. Oh! by the gods! why, you are driving it in tighter.

SCYTHIAN. Is that enough?

MNESILOCHUS. Oh! la, la! oh! la, la! May the plague take you!

SCYTHIAN. Silence! you cursed old wretch! I am going to get a mat to lie upon, so as to watch you close at hand at my ease.

MNESILOCHUS. Ah! what exquisite pleasures Euripides is securing for me! But, oh, ye gods! oh, Zeus the Deliverer, all is not yet lost! I don’t believe him the man to break his word; I just caught sight of him appearing in the form of Perseus, and he told me with a mysterious sign to turn myself into Andromeda. And in truth am I not really bound? ’Tis certain, then, that he is coming to my rescue; for otherwise he would not have steered his flight this way.

EURIPIDES *(as Perseus)*. Oh Nymphs, ye virgins who are dear to me, how am I to approach him? how can I escape the sight of this Scythian? And Echo, thou who reignest in the inmost recesses of the caves, oh! favour my cause and permit me to approach my spouse.

MNESILOCHUS *(as Andromeda)*. A pitiless ruffian has chained up the most unfortunate of mortal maids. Alas! I had barely escaped the filthy claws of an old fury, when another mischance overtook me! This Scythian does not take his eye off me and he has exposed me as food for the crows. Alas! what is to become of me, alone here and without friends! I am not seen mingling in the dances nor in the games of my companions, but heavily loaded with fetters I am given over to the voracity of a Glaucetes. Sing no bridal hymn for me, oh

women, but rather the hymn of captivity, and in tears. Ah! how I suffer! great gods! how I suffer! Alas! alas! and through my own relatives too! My misery would make Tartarus dissolve into tears! Alas! in my terrible distress, I implore the mortal who first shaved me and depilated me, then dressed me in this long robe, and then sent me to this Temple into the midst of the women, to save me. Oh, thou pitiless Fate! I am then accursed, great gods! Ah! who would not be moved at the sight of the appalling tortures under which I succumb? Would that the blazing shaft of the lightning would wither… this barbarian for me! *(pointing to the Scythian archer)* for the immortal light has no further charm for my eyes since I have been descending the shortest path to the dead, tied up, strangled, and maddened with pain.

EURIPIDES *(as Echo)*. Hail! beloved girl. As for your father, Cepheus, who has exposed you in this guise, may the gods annihilate him.

MNESILOCHUS *(as Andromeda)*. And who are you whom my misfortunes have moved to pity?

EURIPIDES. I am Echo, the nymph who repeats all she hears. 'Tis I, who last year lent my help to Euripides in this very place. But, my child, give yourself up to the sad laments that belong to your pitiful condition.

MNESILOCHUS. And you will repeat them?

EURIPIDES. I will not fail you. Begin.

MNESILOCHUS. "Oh! thou divine Night! how slowly thy chariot threads its way through the starry vault, across the sacred realms of the Air and mighty Olympus."

EURIPIDES. Mighty Olympus.

MNESILOCHUS. "Why is it necessary that Andromeda should have all the woes for her share?"

EURIPIDES. For her share.

MNESILOCHUS. "Sad death!"

EURIPIDES. Sad death!

MNESILOCHUS. You weary me, old babbler.

EURIPIDES. Old babbler.

MNESILOCHUS. Oh! you are too unbearable.

EURIPIDES. Unbearable.

MNESILOCHUS. Friend, let me talk by myself. Do please let me. Come, that's enough.

EURIPIDES. That's enough.

MNESILOCHUS. Go and hang yourself!

EURIPIDES. Go and hang yourself!

MNESILOCHUS. What a plague!

EURIPIDES. What a plague!

MNESILOCHUS. Cursed brute!

EURIPIDES. Cursed brute!

MNESILOCHUS. Beware of blows!

EURIPIDES. Beware of blows!

SCYTHIAN. Hullo! what are you jabbering about?

EURIPIDES. What are you jabbering about?

SCYTHIAN. I go to call the Prytanes.

EURIPIDES. I go to call the Prytanes.

SCYTHIAN. This is odd!

EURIPIDES. This is odd!

SCYTHIAN. Whence comes this voice?

EURIPIDES. Whence comes this voice.

SCYTHIAN. Ah! beware!

EURIPIDES. Ah! beware!

SCYTHIAN *(to Mnesilochus)*. Are you mocking me?

EURIPIDES. Are you mocking me?

MNESILOCHUS. No, 'tis this woman, who stands near you.

EURIPIDES. Who stands near you.

SCYTHIAN. Where is the hussy? Ah! she is escaping! Whither, whither are you escaping?

EURIPIDES. Whither, whither are you escaping?

SCYTHIAN. You shall not get away.

EURIPIDES. You shall not get away.

SCYTHIAN. You are chattering still?

EURIPIDES. You are chattering still?

SCYTHIAN. Stop the hussy.

EURIPIDES. Stop the hussy.

SCYTHIAN. What a babbling, cursed woman!

EURIPIDES *(as Perseus)*. "Oh! ye gods! to what barbarian land has my swift flight taken me? I am Perseus, who cleaves the plains of the air with my winged feet, and I am carrying the Gorgon's head to Argos."

SCYTHIAN. What, are you talking about the head of Gorgos, the scribe?

EURIPIDES. No, I am speaking of the head of the Gorgon.

SCYTHIAN. Why, yes! of Gorgus!

EURIPIDES. “But what do I behold? A young maiden, beautiful as the immortals, chained to this rock like a vessel in port?”

MNESILOCHUS. Take pity on me, oh, stranger! I am so unhappy and distraught! Free me from these bonds.

SCYTHIAN. Don’t you talk! a curse upon your impudence! you are going to die, and yet you will be chattering!

EURIPIDES. “Oh! virgin! I take pity on your chains.”

SCYTHIAN. But this is no virgin; ’tis an old rogue, a cheat and a thief.

EURIPIDES. You have lost your wits, Scythian. This is Andromeda, the daughter of Cepheus.

SCYTHIAN. But just look at this tool; is that like a woman?

EURIPIDES. Give me your hand, that I may descend near this young maiden. Each man has his own particular weakness; as for me I am aflame with love for this virgin.

SCYTHIAN. Oh! I’m not jealous; and as he has his back turned this way, why, I make no objection to your pedicating him.

EURIPIDES. “Ah! let me release her, and hasten to join her on the bridal couch.”

SCYTHIAN. If this old man instils you with such ardent concupiscence, why, you can bore through the plank, and so get at his behind.

EURIPIDES. No, I will break his bonds.

SCYTHIAN. Beware of my lash!

EURIPIDES. No matter.

SCYTHIAN. This blade shall cut off your head.

EURIPIDES. “Ah! what can be done? what arguments can I use? This savage will understand nothing! The newest and most cunning fancies are a dead letter to the ignorant. Let us invent some artifice to fit in with his coarse nature.”

SCYTHIAN. I can see the rascal is trying to outwit me.

MNESILOCHUS. Ah! Perseus! remember in what condition you are leaving me.

SCYTHIAN. Are you wanting to feel my lash again!

CHORUS.

Oh! Pallas, who art fond of dances, hasten hither at my call. Oh! thou chaste virgin, the protectress of Athens, I call thee in accordance with the sacred rites, thee, whose evident protection we adore and who keepest the keys of our city in thy hands. Do thou appear, thou whose just hatred has overturned our tyrants. The womenfolk are calling thee; hasten hither at their bidding along with Peace, who shall restore the festivals. And ye, august goddesses, display a smiling and propitious countenance to our gaze; come into your sacred grove, the entry to which is forbidden to men; ’tis there in the midst of sacred orgies that we contemplate your divine features. Come, appear, we pray it of you, oh, venerable Thesmophoriae! If you have ever answered our appeal, oh! come into our midst.

EURIPIDES. Women, if you will be reconciled with me, I am willing, and I undertake never to say anything ill of you in future. Those are my proposals for peace.

CHORUS. And what impels you to make these overtures?

EURIPIDES. This unfortunate man, who is chained to the post, is my father-in-law; if you will restore him to me, you will have no more cause to complain of me; but if not, I shall reveal your pranks to your husbands when they return from the war.

CHORUS. We accept peace, but there is this barbarian whom you must buy over.

EURIPIDES. That's my business. *(He returns as an old woman and is accompanied by a dancing-girl and a flute-girl.)* Come, my little wench, bear in mind what I told you on the road and do it well. Come, go past him and gird up your robe. And you, you little dear, play us the air of a Persian dance.

SCYTHIAN. What is this music that makes me so blithe?

EURIPIDES *(as an old woman)*. Scythian, this young girl is going to practise some dances, which she has to perform at a feast presently.

SCYTHIAN. Very well! let her dance and practise; I won't hinder her. How nimbly she bounds! one might think her a flea on a fleece.

EURIPIDES. Come, my dear, off with your robe and seat yourself on the Scythian's knee; stretch forth your feet to me, that I may take off your slippers.

SCYTHIAN. Ah! yes, seat yourself, my little girl, ah! yes, to be sure.
What a firm little bosom! 'tis just like a turnip.

EURIPIDES *(to the flute-girl)*. An air on the flute, quick! *(To the dancing-girl.)* Well! are you still afraid of the Scythian?

SCYTHIAN. What beautiful thighs!

EURIPIDES. Come! keep still, can't you?

SCYTHIAN. 'Tis altogether a very fine morsel to make a man's cock stand.

EURIPIDES. That's so! *(To the dancing-girl.)* Resume your dress, it is time to be going.

SCYTHIAN. Give me a kiss.

EURIPIDES *(to the dancing-girl)*. Come, give him a kiss.

SCYTHIAN. Oh! oh! oh! my goodness, what soft lips! 'tis like Attic honey.
But might she not stop with me?

EURIPIDES. Impossible, archer; good evening.

SCYTHIAN. Oh! oh! old woman, do me this pleasure.

EURIPIDES. Will you give a drachma?

SCYTHIAN. Aye, that I will.

EURIPIDES. Hand over the money.

SCYTHIAN. I have not got it, but take my quiver in pledge.

EURIPIDES. You will bring her back?

SCYTHIAN. Follow me, my beautiful child. And you, old woman, just keep guard over this man. But what is your name?

EURIPIDES. Artemisia. Can you remember that name?

SCYTHIAN. Artemuxia. Good!

EURIPIDES *(aside)*. Hermes, god of cunning, receive my thanks! everything is turning out for the best. *(To the Scythian.)* As for you, friend, take away this girl, quick. *(Exit the Scythian with the dancing-girl.)* Now let me loose his bonds. *(To Mnesilochus.)* And you, directly I have released you, take to your legs and run off full tilt to your home to find your wife and children.

MNESILOCHUS. I shall not fail in that as soon as I am free.

EURIPIDES *(releases Mnesilochus)*. There! 'Tis done. Come, fly, before the archer lays his hand on you again.

MNESILOCHUS. That's just what I am doing. [*Exit with Euripides.*

SCYTHIAN. Ah! old woman! what a charming little girl! Not at all the prude, and so obliging! Eh! where is the old woman? Ah! I am undone! And the old man, where is he? Hi! old woman! old woman! Ah! but this is a dirty trick! Artemuxia! she has tricked me, that's what the little old woman has done! Get clean out of my sight, you cursed quiver! *(Picks it up and throws it across the stage.)* Ha! you are well named quiver, for you have made me quiver indeed. Oh! what's to be done? Where is the old woman then? Artemuxia!

CHORUS. Are you asking for the old woman who carried the lyre?

SCYTHIAN. Yes, yes; have you seen her?

CHORUS. She has gone that way along with an old man.

SCYTHIAN. Dressed in a long robe?

CHORUS. Yes; run quick, and you will overtake them.

SCYTHIAN. Ah! rascally old woman! Which way has she fled? Artemuxia!

CHORUS. Straight on; follow your nose. But, hi! where are you running to now? Come back, you are going exactly the wrong way.

SCYTHIAN. Ye gods! ye gods! and all this while Artemuxia is escaping. [*Exit running.*

CHORUS. Go your way! and a pleasant journey to you! But our sports have lasted long enough; it is time for each of us to be off home; and may the two goddesses reward us for our labours!

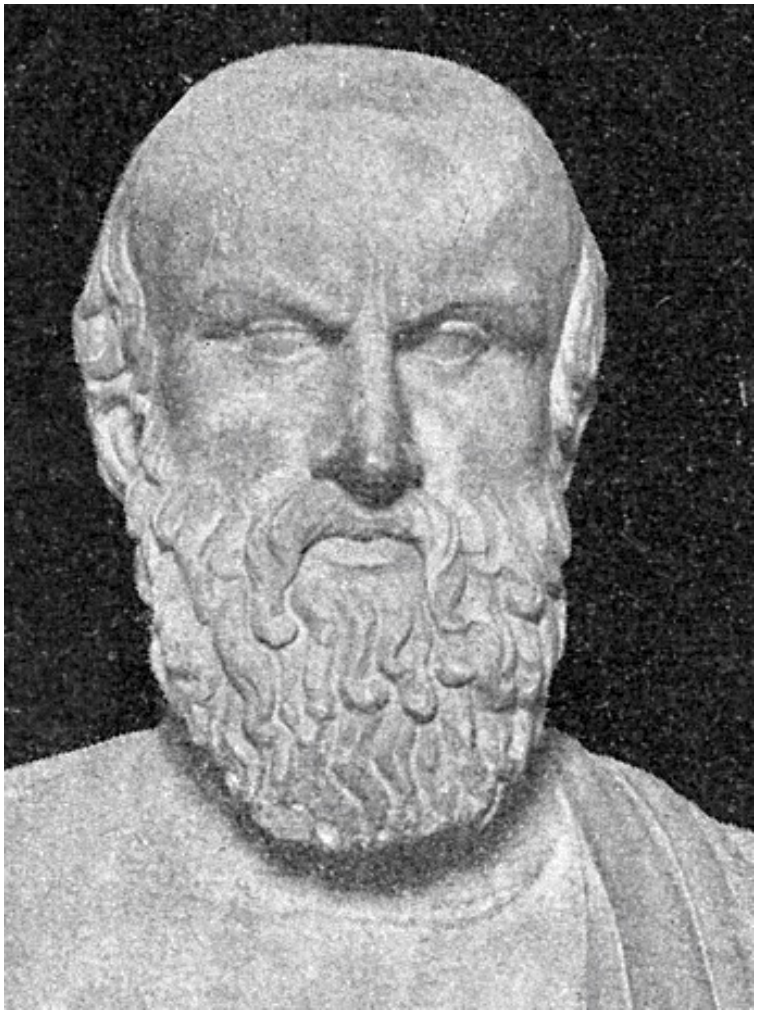
THE FROGS

Anonymous translation for the Athenian Society, London, 1912

First performed at the Lenaia in 405 BC, a year after the death of Euripides, this famous comedy received first place in the competition. *The Frogs* presents the unlikely tale of the god Dionysus, who, despairing of the quality of Athens' contemporary tragedians, travels to Hades to bring the playwright Euripides back from the dead. The comedy has been viewed as having the underlying political theme of esteeming old values and beliefs, covertly urging the audience to reject the current leadership that had been put in place by conquering Sparta. In Dionysus' desire for the old works of Athens' great tragedians, Aristophanes rouses the Athenians' desire to return to their days of hegemony in the Greek world.

The play is formed of two parts, making the comedy unique in its structure compared to other Aristophanean works. In the first part, Dionysus seeks to win admission to Pluto's palace and find the recently deceased Euripides. Then follows a power struggle between Euripides and Aeschylus, where the former is jealous of the latter's place as the greatest tragic poet. Dionysus is asked by Pluto to mediate the contest or *agon*, heralding the second part of the comedy. The combination of a journey part, followed by a contest section creates an unusual structure to the play that would have been surprising and innovative for contemporary audiences.

The frogs of the title only appear in one scene, during the first choral interlude (*parodos*), sung by the chorus of frogs, as Dionysus is ferried across Lake Acheron by Charon. The legendary croaking refrain – Brekekekèx-koàx-koáx (Βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ) – greatly annoys Dionysus, who engages in a mocking debate (*agon*) with the frogs.



Bust of Aeschylus from the Capitoline Museum, Rome

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INTRODUCTION

Like 'The Birds' this play rather avoids politics than otherwise, its leading *motif*, over and above the pure fun and farce for their own sake of the burlesque descent into the infernal regions, being a literary one, an onslaught on Euripides the Tragedian and all his works and ways.

It was produced in the year 405 B.C., the year after 'The Birds,' and only one year before the Peloponnesian War ended disastrously for the Athenian cause in the capture of the city by Lysander. First brought out at the Lenaean festival in January, it was played a second time at the Dionysia in March of the same year — a far from common honour. The drama was not staged in the Author's own name, we do not know for what reasons, but it won the first prize, Phrynichus' 'Muses' being second.

The plot is as follows. The God Dionysus, patron of the Drama, is dissatisfied with the condition of the Art of Tragedy at Athens, and resolves to descend to Hades in order to bring back again to earth one of the old tragedians — Euripides, he thinks, for choice. Dressing himself up, lion's skin and club complete, as Heracles, who has performed the same perilous journey before, and accompanied by his slave Xanthias *(a sort of classical Sancho Panza)* with the baggage, he starts on the fearful expedition.

Coming to the shores of Acheron, he is ferried over in Charon's boat — Xanthias has to walk round — the First Chorus of Marsh Frogs *(from which the play takes its title)* greeting him with prolonged croakings. Approaching Pluto's Palace in fear and trembling, he knocks timidly at the gate. Being presently admitted, he finds a contest on the point of being held before the King of Hades and the Initiates of the Eleusinian Mysteries, who form the Second Chorus, between Aeschylus, the present occupant of the throne of tragic excellence in hell, and the pushing, self-satisfied, upstart Euripides, who is for ousting him from his pride of place.

Each poet quotes in turn from his Dramas, and the indignant Aeschylus makes fine fun of his rival's verses, and shows him up in the usual Aristophanic style as a corrupter of morals, a contemptible casuist, and a professor of the dangerous new learning of the Sophists, so justly held in suspicion by true-blue Athenian Conservatives. Eventually a pair of scales is brought in, and verses alternately spouted by the two candidates are weighed against each other, the mighty lines of the Father of Tragedy making his flippant, finickin little rival's scale kick the beam every time.

Dionysus becomes a convert to the superior merits of the old school of tragedy, and contemptuously dismisses Euripides, to take Aeschylus back with him to the upper world instead, leaving Sophocles meantime in occupation of the coveted throne of tragedy in the nether regions.

Needless to say, the various scenes of the journey to Hades, the crossing of Acheron, the Frogs' choric songs, and the trial before Pluto, afford opportunities for much excellent fooling in our Author's very finest vein of drollery, and "seem to have supplied the original idea for those modern burlesques upon the Olympian and Tartarian deities which were at one time so popular."

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DIONYSUS.
XANTHIAS, his Servant.
HERACLES.
A DEAD MAN.
CHARON.
AEACUS.
FEMALE ATTENDANT OF PERSEPHONÉ.
INKEEPERS' WIVES.
EURIPIDES.
AESCHYLUS.
PLUTO.
CHORUS OF FROGS.
CHORUS OF INITIATES.

SCENE: In front of the temple of Heracles, and on the banks of Acheron in the Infernal Regions.

THE FROGS

XANTHIAS. Now am I to make one of those jokes that have the knack of always making the spectators laugh?

DIONYSUS. Aye, certainly, any one you like, excepting "I am worn out."
Take care you don't say that, for it gets on my nerves.

XANTHIAS. Do you want some other drollery?

DIONYSUS. Yes, only not, "I am quite broken up."

XANTHIAS. Then what witty thing shall I say?

DIONYSUS. Come, take courage; only …

XANTHIAS. Only what?

DIONYSUS. … don't start saying as you shift your package from shoulder to shoulder, "Ah! that's a relief!"

XANTHIAS. May I not at least say, that unless I am relieved of this cursed load I shall let wind?

DIONYSUS. Oh! for pity's sake, no! you don't want to make me spew.

XANTHIAS. What need then had I to take this luggage, if I must not copy the porters that Phrynichus, Lycis and Amipsias never fail to put on the stage?

DIONYSUS. Do nothing of the kind. Whenever I chance to see one of these stage tricks, I always leave the theatre feeling a good year older.

XANTHIAS. Oh! my poor back! you are broken and I am not allowed to make a single joke.

DIONYSUS. Just mark the insolence of this Sybarite! I, Dionysus, the son of a … wine-jar, I walk, I tire myself, and I set yonder rascal upon an ass, that he may not have the burden of carrying his load.

XANTHIAS. But am I not carrying it?

DIONYSUS. No, since you are on your beast.

XANTHIAS. Nevertheless I am carrying this….

DIONYSUS. What?

XANTHIAS. … and it is very heavy.

DIONYSUS. But this burden you carry is borne by the ass.

XANTHIAS. What I have here, 'tis certainly I who bear it, and not the ass, no, by all the gods, most certainly not!

DIONYSUS. How can you claim to be carrying it, when you are carried?

XANTHIAS. That I can't say; but this shoulder is broken, anyhow.

DIONYSUS. Well then, since you say that the ass is no good to you, pick her up in your turn and carry her.

XANTHIAS. What a pity I did not fight at sea; I would baste your ribs for that joke.

DIONYSUS. Dismount, you clown! Here is a door, at which I want to make my first stop. Hi! slave! hi! hi! slave!

HERACLES *(from inside the Temple)*. Do you want to beat in the door? He knocks like a Centaur. Why, what's the matter?

DIONYSUS. Xanthias!

XANTHIAS. Well?

DIONYSUS. Did you notice?

XANTHIAS. What?

DIONYSUS. How I frightened him?

XANTHIAS. Bah! you're mad!

HERACLES. Ho, by Demeter! I cannot help laughing; it's no use biting my lips, I must laugh.

DIONYSUS. Come out, friend; I have need of you.

HERACLES. Oh! 'tis enough to make a fellow hold his sides to see this lion's-skin over a saffron robe! What does this mean? Buskins and a bludgeon! What connection have they? Where are you off to in this rig?

DIONYSUS. When I went aboard Clisthenes….

HERACLES. Did you fight?

DIONYSUS. We sank twelve or thirteen ships of the enemy.

HERACLES. You?

DIONYSUS. Aye, by Apollo!

HERACLES. You have dreamt it.

DIONYSUS. As I was reading the 'Andromeda' on the ship, I suddenly felt my heart afire with a wish so violent….

HERACLES. A wish! of what nature?

DIONYSUS. Oh, quite small, like Molon.

HERACLES. You wished for a woman?

DIONYSUS. No.

HERACLES. A young boy, then?

DIONYSUS. Nothing of the kind.

HERACLES. A man?

DIONYSUS. Faugh!

HERACLES. Might you then have had dealings with Clisthenes?

DIONYSUS. Have mercy, brother; no mockery! I am quite ill, so greatly does my desire torment me!

HERACLES. And what desire is it, little brother?

DIONYSUS. I cannot disclose it, but I will convey it to you by hints.
Have you ever been suddenly seized with a desire for pea-soup?

HERACLES. For pea-soup! oh! oh! yes, a thousand times in my life.

DIONYSUS. Do you take me or shall I explain myself in some other way?

HERACLES. Oh! as far as the pea-soup is concerned, I understand marvellously well.

DIONYSUS. So great is the desire, which devours me, for Euripides.

HERACLES. But he is dead.

DIONYSUS. There is no human power can prevent my going to him.

HERACLES. To the bottom of Hades?

DIONYSUS. Aye, and further than the bottom, an it need.

HERACLES. And what do you want with him?

DIONYSUS. I want a master poet; “some are dead and gone, and others are good for nothing.”

HERACLES. Is Iophon dead then?

DIONYSUS. He is the only good one left me, and even of him I don’t know quite what to think.

HERACLES. Then there’s Sophocles, who is greater than Euripides; if you must absolutely bring someone back from Hades, why not make him live again?

DIONYSUS. No, not until I have taken Iophon by himself and tested him for

what he is worth. Besides, Euripides is very artful and won't leave a stone unturned to get away with me, whereas Sophocles is as easy-going with Pluto as he was when on earth.

HERACLES. And Agathon? Where is he?

DIONYSUS. He has left me; 'twas a good poet and his friends regret him.

HERACLES. And whither has the poor fellow gone?

DIONYSUS. To the banquet of the blest.

HERACLES. And Xenocles?

DIONYSUS. May the plague seize him!

HERACLES. And Pythangelus?

XANTHIAS. They don't say ever a word of poor me, whose shoulder is quite shattered.

HERACLES. Is there not a crowd of other little lads, who produce tragedies by the thousand and are a thousand times more loquacious than Euripides?

DIONYSUS. They are little sapless twigs, chatterboxes, who twitter like the swallows, destroyers of the art, whose aptitude is withered with a single piece and who sputter forth all their talent to the tragic Muse at their first attempt. But look where you will, you will not find a creative poet who gives vent to a noble thought.

HERACLES. How creative?

DIONYSUS. Aye, creative, who dares to risk "the ethereal dwellings of Zeus," or "the wing of Time," or "a heart that is above swearing by the sacred emblems," and "a tongue that takes an oath, while yet the soul is unpledged."

HERACLES. Is that the kind of thing that pleases you?

DIONYSUS. I'm more than madly fond of it.

HERACLES. But such things are simply idiotic, you feel it yourself.

DIONYSUS. “Don’t come trespassing on my mind; you have a brain of your own to keep thoughts in.”

HERACLES. But nothing could be more detestable.

DIONYSUS. Where cookery is concerned, you can be my master.

XANTHIAS. They don’t say a thing about me!

DIONYSUS. If I have decked myself out according to your pattern, ’tis that you may tell me, in case I should need them, all about the hosts who received you, when you journeyed to Cerberus; tell me of them as well as of the harbours, the bakeries, the brothels, the drinking-shops, the fountains, the roads, the eating-houses and of the hostels where there are the fewest bugs.

XANTHIAS. They never speak of me.

HERACLES. Go down to hell? Will you be ready to dare that, you madman?

DIONYSUS. Enough of that; but tell me the shortest road, that is neither too hot nor too cold, to get down to Pluto.

HERACLES. Let me see, what is the best road to show you? Aye, which? Ah! there’s the road of the gibbet and the rope. Go and hang yourself.

DIONYSUS. Be silent! your road is choking me.

HERACLES. There is another path, both very short and well-trodden; the one that goes through the mortar.

DIONYSUS. ’Tis hemlock you mean to say.

HERACLES. Precisely so.

DIONYSUS. That road is both cold and icy. Your legs get frozen at once.

HERACLES. Do you want me to tell you a very steep road, one that descends very quickly?

DIONYSUS. Ah! with all my heart; I don’t like long walks.

HERACLES. Go to the Ceramicus.

DIONYSUS. And then?

HERACLES. Mount to the top of the highest tower …

DIONYSUS. To do what?

HERACLES. … and there keep your eye on the torch, which is to be the signal. When the spectators demand it to be flung, fling yourself …

DIONYSUS. Where?

HERACLES. … down.

DIONYSUS. But I should break the two hemispheres of my brain. Thanks for your road, but I don't want it.

HERACLES. But which one then?

DIONYSUS. The one you once travelled yourself.

HERACLES. Ah! that's a long journey. First you will reach the edge of the vast, deep mere of Acheron.

DIONYSUS. And how is that to be crossed?

HERACLES. There is an ancient ferryman, Charon by name, who will pass you over in his little boat for a diobolus.

DIONYSUS. Oh! what might the diobolus has everywhere! But however has it got as far as that?

HERACLES. 'Twas Theseus who introduced its vogue. After that you will see snakes and all sorts of fearful monsters …

DIONYSUS. Oh! don't try to frighten me and make me afraid, for I am quite decided.

HERACLES. … then a great slough with an eternal stench, a veritable cesspool, into which those are plunged who have wronged a guest, cheated a young boy

out of the fee for his complaisance, beaten their mother, boxed their father's ears, taken a false oath or transcribed some tirade of Morsimus.

DIONYSUS. For mercy's sake, add likewise — or learnt the Pyrrhic dance of Cinesias.

HERACLES. Further on 'twill be a gentle concert of flutes on every side, a brilliant light, just as there is here, myrtle groves, bands of happy men and women and noisy plaudits.

DIONYSUS. Who are these happy folk?

HERACLES. The initiate.

XANTHIAS. And I am the ass that carries the Mysteries; but I've had enough of it.

HERACLES. They will give you all the information you will need, for they live close to Pluto's palace, indeed on the road that leads to it.
Farewell, brother, and an agreeable journey to you. *(He returns into his Temple.)* DIONYSUS. And you, good health. Slave! take up your load again.

XANTHIAS. Before having laid it down?

DIONYSUS. And be quick about it too.

XANTHIAS. Oh, no, I adjure you! Rather hire one of the dead, who is going to Hades.

DIONYSUS. And should I not find one….

XANTHIAS. Then you can take me.

DIONYSUS. You talk sense. Ah! here they are just bringing a dead man along. Hi! man, 'tis you I'm addressing, you, dead fellow there! Will you carry a package to Pluto for me?

DEAD MAN. Is't very heavy?

DIONYSUS. This. *(He shows him the baggage, which Xanthias has laid on the*

ground.) DEAD MAN. You will pay me two drachmae.

DIONYSUS. Oh! that's too dear.

DEAD MAN. Well then, bearers, move on.

DIONYSUS. Stay, friend, so that I may bargain with you.

DEAD MAN. Give me two drachmae, or it's no deal.

DIONYSUS. Hold! here are nine obols.

DEAD MAN. I would sooner go back to earth again.

XANTHIAS. Is that cursed rascal putting on airs? Come, then, I'll go.

DIONYSUS. You're a good and noble fellow. Let us make the best of our way to the boat.

CHARON. Ahoy, ahoy! put ashore.

XANTHIAS. What's that?

DIONYSUS. Why, by Zeus, 'tis the mere of which Heracles spoke, and I see the boat.

XANTHIAS. Ah! there's Charon.

DIONYSUS. Hail! Charon.

DEAD MAN. Hail! Charon.

CHARON. Who comes hither from the home of cares and misfortunes to rest on the banks of Lethé? Who comes to the ass's fleece, who is for the land of the Cerberians, or the crows, or Taenarus?

DIONYSUS. I am.

CHARON. Get aboard quick then.

DIONYSUS. Where will you ferry me to? Where are you going to land me?

CHARON. In hell, if you wish. But step in, do.

DIONYSUS. Come here, slave.

CHARON. I carry no slave, unless he has fought at sea to save his skin.

XANTHIAS. But I could not, for my eyes were bad.

CHARON. Well then! be off and walk round the mere.

XANTHIAS. Where shall I come to a halt?

CHARON. At the stone of Auaenus, near the drinking-shop.

DIONYSUS. Do you understand?

XANTHIAS. Perfectly. Oh! unhappy wretch that I am, surely, surely I must have met something of evil omen as I came out of the house?

CHARON. Come, sit to your oar. If there be anyone else who wants to cross, let him hurry. Hullo! what are you doing?

DIONYSUS. What am I doing? I am sitting on the oar as you told me.

CHARON. Will you please have the goodness to place yourself there, pot-belly?

DIONYSUS. There.

CHARON. Put out your hands, stretch your arms.

DIONYSUS. There.

CHARON. No tomfoolery! row hard, and put some heart into the work!

DIONYSUS. Row! and how can I? I, who have never set foot on a ship?

CHARON. There's nothing easier; and once you're at work, you will hear some enchanting singers.

DIONYSUS. Who are they?

CHARON. Frogs with the voices of swans; ’tis most delightful.

DIONYSUS. Come, set the stroke.

CHARON. Yo ho! yo ho!

FROGS. Brekekekex, coax, coax, brekekekekex, coax. Slimy offspring of the marshland, let our harmonious voices mingle with the sounds of the flute, coax, coax! let us repeat the songs that we sing in honour of the Nysaean Dionysus on the day of the feast of pots, when the drunken throng reels towards our temple in the Limnae. Brekekekex, coax, coax.

DIONYSUS. I am beginning to feel my bottom getting very sore, my dear little coax, coax.

FROGS. Brekekekex, coax, coax.

DIONYSUS. But doubtless you don’t care.

FROGS. Brekekekex, coax, coax.

DIONYSUS. May you perish with your coax, your endless coax!

FROGS. And why change it, you great fool? I am beloved by the Muses with the melodious lyre, by the goat-footed Pan, who draws soft tones out of his reed; I am the delight of Apollo, the god of the lyre, because I make the rushes, which are used for the bridge of the lyre, grow in my marshes. Brekekekex, coax, coax.

DIONYSUS. I have got blisters and my behind is all of a sweat; by dint of constant movement, it will soon be saying….

FROGS. Brekekekex, coax, coax.

DIONYSUS. Come, race of croakers, be quiet.

FROGS. Not we; we shall only cry the louder. On fine sunny days, it pleases us to hop through galingale and sedge and to sing while we swim; and when Zeus is pouring down his rain, we join our lively voices to the rustle of the drops. Brekekekex, coax, coax.

DIONYSUS. I forbid you to do it.

FROGS. Oh! that would be too hard!

DIONYSUS. And is it not harder for me to wear myself out with rowing?

FROGS. Brekekekex, coax, coax.

DIONYSUS. May you perish! I don't care.

FROGS. And from morning till night we will shriek with the whole width of our gullets, "Brekekekex, coax, coax."

DIONYSUS. I will cry louder than you all.

FROGS. Oh! don't do that!

DIONYSUS. Oh, yes, I will. I shall cry the whole day, if necessary, until I no longer hear your coax. *(He begins to cry against the frogs, who finally stop.)* Ah! I knew I would soon put an end to your coax.

CHARON. Enough, enough, a last pull, ship oars, step ashore and pay your passage money.

DIONYSUS. Look! here are my two obols…. Xanthias! where is Xanthias? Hi! Xanthias!

XANTHIAS *(from a distance)*. Hullo!

DIONYSUS. Come here.

XANTHIAS. I greet you, master.

DIONYSUS. What is there that way?

XANTHIAS. Darkness and mud!

DIONYSUS. Did you see the parricides and the perjured he told us of?

XANTHIAS. Did you?

DIONYSUS. Ha! by Posidon! I see some of them now. Well, what are we going to do?

XANTHIAS. The best is to go on, for ’tis here that the horrible monsters are, Heracles told us of.

DIONYSUS. Ah! the wag! He spun yarns to frighten me, but I am a brave fellow and he is jealous of me. There exists no greater braggart than Heracles. Ah! I wish I might meet some monster, so as to distinguish myself by some deed of daring worthy of my daring journey.

XANTHIAS. Ah! hark! I hear a noise.

DIONYSUS *(all of a tremble)*. Where then, where?

XANTHIAS. Behind you.

DIONYSUS. Place yourself behind me.

XANTHIAS. Ah! ’tis in front now.

DIONYSUS. Then pass to the front.

XANTHIAS. Oh! what a monster I can see!

DIONYSUS. What’s it like?

XANTHIAS. Dreadful, terrible! it assumes every shape; now ’tis a bull, then a mule; again it is a most beautiful woman.

DIONYSUS. Where is she that I may run toward her?

XANTHIAS. The monster is no longer a woman; ’tis now a dog.

DIONYSUS. Then it is the Empusa.

XANTHIAS. Its whole face is ablaze.

DIONYSUS. And it has a brazen leg?

XANTHIAS. Aye, i’ faith! and the other is an ass’s leg, rest well assured of that.

DIONYSUS. Where shall I fly to?

XANTHIAS. And I?

DIONYSUS. Priest, save me, that I may drink with you.

XANTHIAS. Oh! mighty Heracles! we are dead men.

DIONYSUS. Silence! I adjure you. Don't utter that name.

XANTHIAS. Well then, we are dead men, Dionysus!

DIONYSUS. That still less than the other.

XANTHIAS. Keep straight on, master, here, here, this way.

DIONYSUS. Well?

XANTHIAS. Be at ease, all goes well and we can say with Hegelochus, "After the storm, I see the return of the *cat*." The Empusa has gone.

DIONYSUS. Swear it to me.

XANTHIAS. By Zeus!

DIONYSUS. Swear it again.

XANTHIAS. By Zeus!

DIONYSUS. Once more.

XANTHIAS. By Zeus!

DIONYSUS. Oh! my god! how white I went at the sight of the Empusa! But yonder fellow got red instead, so horribly afraid was he! Alas! to whom do I owe this terrible meeting? What god shall I accuse of having sought my death? Might it be "the Aether, the dwelling of Zeus," or "the wing of Time"?

XANTHIAS. Hist!

DIONYSUS. What's the matter?

XANTHIAS. Don’t you hear?

DIONYSUS. What then?

XANTHIAS. The sound of flutes.

DIONYSUS. Aye, certainly, and the wind wafts a smell of torches hither, which bespeaks the Mysteries a league away. But make no noise; let us hide ourselves and listen.

CHORUS. Iacchus, oh! Iacchus! Iacchus, oh! Iacchus!

XANTHIAS. Master, these are the initiates, of whom Heracles spoke and who are here at their sports; they are incessantly singing of Iacchus, just like Diagoras.

DIONYSUS. I believe you are right, but ’tis best to keep ourselves quiet till we get better information.

CHORUS. Iacchus, venerated god, hasten at our call. Iacchus, oh! Iacchus! come into this meadow, thy favourite resting-place; come to direct the sacred choirs of the Initiate; may a thick crown of fruit-laden myrtle branches rest on thy head and may thy bold foot step this free and joyful dance, taught us by the Graces — this pure, religious measure, that our sacred choirs rehearse.

XANTHIAS. Oh! thou daughter of Demeter, both mighty and revered, what a delicious odour of pork!

DIONYSUS. Cannot you keep still then, fellow, once you get a whiff of a bit of tripe?

CHORUS. Brandish the flaming torches and so revive their brilliancy. Iacchus, oh! Iacchus! bright luminary of our nocturnal Mysteries. The meadow sparkles with a thousand fires; the aged shake off the weight of cares and years; they have once more found limbs of steel, wherewith to take part in thy sacred measures; and do thou, blessed deity, lead the dances of youth upon this dewy carpet of flowers with a torch in thine hand.

Silence, make way for our choirs, you profane and impure souls, who have neither been present at the festivals of the noble Muses, nor ever footed a dance

in their honour, and who are not initiated into the mysterious language of the dithyrambs of the voracious Cratinus; away from here he who applauds misplaced buffoonery. Away from here the bad citizen, who for his private ends fans and nurses the flame of sedition, the chief who sells himself, when his country is weathering the storms, and surrenders either fortresses or ships; who, like Thorycion, the wretched collector of tolls, sends prohibited goods from Aegina to Epidaurus, such as oar-leathers, sailcloth and pitch, and who secures a subsidy for a hostile fleet, or soils the statues of Hecaté, while he is humming some dithyramb. Away from here, the orator who nibbles at the salary of the poets, because he has been scouted in the ancient solemnities of Dionysus; to all such I say, and I repeat, and I say it again for the third time, "Make way for the choruses of the Initiate." But you, raise you your voice anew; resume your nocturnal hymns as it is meet to do at this festival.

Let each one advance boldly into the retreats of our flowery meads, let him mingle in our dances, let him give vent to jesting, to wit and to satire. Enough of junketing, lead forward! let our voices praise the divine protectress with ardent love, yea! praise her, who promises to assure the welfare of this country for ever, in spite of Thorycion.

Let our hymns now be addressed to Demeter, the Queen of Harvest, the goddess crowned with ears of corn; to her be dedicated the strains of our divine concerts. Oh! Demeter, who presidest over the pure mysteries, help us and protect thy choruses; far from all danger, may I continually yield myself to sports and dancing, mingle laughter with seriousness, as is fitting at thy festivals, and as the reward for my biting sarcasms may I wreathe my head with the triumphal fillets. And now let our songs summon hither the lovable goddess, who so often joins in our dances.

Oh, venerated Dionysus, who hast created such soft melodies for this festival, come to accompany us to the goddess, show that you can traverse a long journey without wearying. Dionysus, the king of the dance, guide my steps. 'Tis thou who, to raise a laugh and for the sake of economy, hast torn our sandals and our garments; let us bound, let us dance at our pleasure, for we have nothing to spoil. Dionysus, king of the dance, guide my steps. Just now I saw through a corner of my eye a ravishing young girl, the companion of our sports; I saw the nipple of her bosom peeping through a rent in her tunic. Dionysus, king of the dance, guide my steps.

DIONYSUS. Aye, I like to mingle with these choruses; I would fain dance and sport with that young girl.

XANTHIAS. And I too.

CHORUS. Would you like us to mock together at Archidemus? He is still awaiting his seven-year teeth to have himself entered as a citizen; but he is none the less a chief of the people among the Athenians and the greatest rascal of 'em all. I am told that Clisthenes is tearing the hair out of his rump and lacerating his cheeks on the tomb of Sebinus, the Anaphlystian; with his forehead against the ground, he is beating his bosom and groaning and calling him by name. As for Callias, the illustrious son of Hippobinus, the new Heracles, he is fighting a terrible battle of love on his galleys; dressed up in a lion's skin, he fights a fierce naval battle — with the girls' cunts.

DIONYSUS. Could you tell us where Pluto dwells? We are strangers and have just arrived.

CHORUS. Go no farther, and know without further question that you are at his gates.

DIONYSUS. Slave, pick up your baggage.

XANTHIAS. This wretched baggage, 'tis like Corinth, the daughter of Zeus, for it's always in his mouth.

CHORUS. And now do ye, who take part in this religious festival, dance a gladsome round in the flowery grove in honour of the goddess.

DIONYSUS. As for myself, I will go with the young girls and the women into the enclosure, where the nocturnal ceremonies are held; 'tis I will bear the sacred torch.

CHORUS. Let us go into the meadows, that are sprinkled with roses, to form, according to our rites, the graceful choirs, over which the blessed Fates preside. 'Tis for us alone that the sun doth shine; his glorious rays illumine the Initiate, who have led the pious life, that is equally dear to strangers and citizens.

DIONYSUS. Come now! how should we knock at this door? How do the dwellers in these parts knock?

XANTHIAS. Lose no time and attack the door with vigour, if you have the courage of Heracles as well as his costume.

DIONYSUS. Ho! there! Slave!

AEACUS. Who's there?

DIONYSUS. Heracles, the bold.

AEACUS. Ah! wretched, impudent, shameless, threefold rascal, the most rascally of rascals. Ah! 'tis you who hunted out our dog Cerberus, whose keeper I was! But I have got you to-day; and the black stones of Styx, the rocks of Acheron, from which the blood is dripping, and the roaming dogs of Cocytus shall account to me for you; the hundred-headed Hydra shall tear your sides to pieces; the Tartessian Muraena shall fasten itself on your lungs and the Tithrasian Gorgons shall tear your kidneys and your gory entrails to shreds; I will go and fetch them as quickly as possible.

XANTHIAS. Eh! what are you doing there?

DIONYSUS *(stooping down)*. I have just shit myself! Invoke the god.

XANTHIAS. Get up at once. How a stranger would laugh, if he saw you.

DIONYSUS. Ah! I'm fainting. Place a sponge on my heart.

XANTHIAS. Here, take it.

DIONYSUS. Place it yourself.

XANTHIAS. But where? Good gods, where *is* your heart?

DIONYSUS. It has sunk into my shoes with fear. *(Takes his slave's hand holding the sponge, and applies it to his bottom.)* XANTHIAS. Oh! you most cowardly of gods and men!

DIONYSUS. What! I cowardly? I, who have asked you for a sponge! 'Tis what no one else would have done.

XANTHIAS. How so?

DIONYSUS. A poltroon would have fallen backwards, being overcome with the fumes; as for me, I got up and moreover I wiped myself clean.

XANTHIAS. Ah! by Posidon! a wonderful feat of intrepidity!

DIONYSUS. Aye, certainly. And you did not tremble at the sound of his threatening words?

XANTHIAS. They never troubled me.

DIONYSUS. Well then, since you are so brave and fearless, become what I am, take this bludgeon and this lion's hide, you, whose heart has no knowledge of fear; I, in return, will carry the baggage.

XANTHIAS. Here, take it, take it quick! 'this my duty to obey you, and behold, Heracles-Xanthias! Do I look like a coward of your kidney?

DIONYSUS. No. You are the exact image of the god of Melité, dressed up as a rascal. Come, I will take the baggage.

FEMALE ATTENDANT OF PERSEPHONÉ. Ah! is it you then, beloved Heracles? Come in. As soon as ever the goddess, my mistress Persephoné, knew of your arrival, she quickly had the bread into the oven and clapped two or three pots of bruised peas upon the fire; she has had a whole bullock roasted and both cakes and rolled backed. Come in quick!

XANTHIAS. No, thank you.

ATTENDANT. Oh! by Apollo! I shall not let you off. She has also had poultry boiled for you, sweetmeats makes, and has prepared you some delicious wine. Come then, enter with me.

XANTHIAS. I am much obliged.

ATTENDANT. Are you mad? I will not let you go. There is likewise and enchanted flute-girl specially for you, and two or three dancing wenches.

XANTHIAS. What do you say? Dancing wenches?

ATTENDANT. In the prime of their life and all freshly depilated. Come, enter,

for the cook was going to take the fish off the fire and the table was being spread.

XANTHIAS. Very well then! Run in quickly and tell the dancing-girls I am coming. Slave! pick up the baggage and follow me.

DIONYSUS. Not so fast! Oh! indeed! I disguise you as Heracles for a joke and you take the thing seriously! None of your nonsense, Xanthias! Take back the baggage.

XANTHIAS. What? You are not thinking of taking back what you gave me yourself?

DIONYSUS. No, I don't think about it; I do it. Off with that skin!

XANTHIAS. Witness how i am treated, ye great dogs, and be my judges!

DIONYSUS. What gods? Are you so stupid, such a fool? How can you, a slave and a mortal, be the son of Alcmena?

XANTHIAS. Come then! 'tis well! take them. But perhaps you will be needing me one day, an it please the gods.

CHORUS. 'Tis the act of a wise and sensible man, who has done much sailing, always to trim his sail towards the quarter whence the fair wind wafts, rather than stand stiff and motionless like a god Terminus. To change your part to serve your own interest is to act like a clever man, a true Theramenes.

DIONYSUS. Faith! 'twould be funny indeed if Xanthias, a slave, were indolently stretched out on purple cushions and fucking the dancing-girl; if he were then to ask me for a pot, while I, looking on, would be rubbing my tool, and this master rogue, on seeing it, were to know out my front teeth with a blow of his fist.

FIRST INKEEPER'S WIFE. Here! Plathané, Plathané! do come! here is the rascal who once came into our shop and ate up sixteen loaves for us.

SECOND INKEEPER'S WIFE. Aye, truly, 'tis he himself!

XANTHIAS. This is turning out rough for somebody.

FIRST WIFE. And besides that, twenty pieces of boiled meat at half an obolus apiece.

XANTHIAS. There's someone going to get punished.

FIRST WIFE. And I don't know how many cloves of garlic.

DIONYSUS. You are rambling, my dear, you don't know what you are saying.

FIRST WIFE. Hah! you thought I should not know you, because of your buskins! And then all the salt fish, I had forgotten that!

SECOND WIFE. And then, alas! the fresh cheese that he devoured, osier baskets and all! Ten, when I asked for my money, he started to roar and shoot terrible looks at me.

XANTHIAS. As! I recognize him well by that token; 'tis just his way.

SECOND WIFE. And he drew out his sword like a madman.

FIRST WIFE. By the gods, yes.

SECOND WIFE. Terrified to death, we clambered up to the upper storey, and he fled at top speed, carrying off our baskets with him.

XANTHIAS. Ah! this is again his style! But you ought to take action.

FIRST WIFE. Run quick and call Cleon, my patron.

SECOND WIFE. And you, should you run against Hyperbolus, bring him to me; we will knock the life out of our robber.

FIRST WIFE. Oh! you miserable glutton! how I should delight in breaking those grinders of yours, which devoured my goods!

SECOND WIFE. And I in hurling you into the malefactor's pit.

FIRST WIFE. And I in slitting with one stroke of the sickle that gullet that bolted down the tripe. But I am going to fetch Cleon; he shall summon you before the court this very day and force you to disgorge.

DIONYSUS. May I die, if Xanthias is not my dearest friend.

XANTHIAS. Can I be the son of Alcmena, I, a slave and a mortal?

DIONYSUS. I know, I know, that you are in a fury and you have the right to be; you can even beat me and I will not reply. But if I ever take this costume from you again, may I die of the most fearful torture — I, my wife, my children, all those who belong to me, down to the very last, and blear-eyed Archidemus into the bargain.

XANTHIAS. I accept your oath, and on those terms I agree.

CHORUS. 'Tis now your cue, since you have resumed the dress, to act the brave and to throw terror into your glance, thus recalling the god whom you represent. But if you play your part badly, if you yield to any weakness, you will again have to load your shoulders with the baggage.

XANTHIAS. Friends, your advice is good, but I was thinking the same myself; if there is any good to be got, my master will again want to despoil me of this costume, of that I am quite certain. Ne'ertheless, I am going to show a fearless heart and shoot forth ferocious looks. And lo! the time for it has come, for I hear a noise at the door.

AEACUS *(to his slaves)*. Bind me this dog-thief, that he may be punished. Hurry yourselves, hurry!

DIONYSUS. This is going to turn out badly for someone.

XANTHIAS. Look to yourselves and don't come near me.

AEACUS. Hah! you would show fight! Ditylas, Sceblyas, Pardocas, come here and have at him!

DIONYSUS. Ah! you would strike him because he has stolen!

XANTHIAS. 'Tis horrible!

DIONYSUS. 'Tis a revolting cruelty!

XANTHIAS. By Zeus! may I die, if I ever came here or stole from you the value

of a pin! But I will act nobly; take this slave, put him to the question, and if you obtain the proof of my guilt, put me to death.

AEACUS. In what manner shall I put him to the question?

XANTHIAS. In every manner; you may lash him to the wooden horse, hang him, cut him open with scourging, flay him, twist his limbs, pour vinegar down his nostrils, load him with bricks, anything you like; only don't beat him with leeks or fresh garlic.

AEACUS. 'Tis well conceived; but if the blows maim your slave, you will be claiming damages from me.

XANTHIAS. No, certainly not! set about putting him to the question.

AEACUS. It shall be done here, for I wish him to speak in your presence.
Come, put down your pack, and be careful not to lie.

DIONYSUS. I forbid you to torture me, for I am immortal; if you dare it, woe to you!

AEACUS. What say you?

DIONYSUS. I say that I am an immortal, Dionysus, the son of Zeus, and that this fellow is only a slave.

AEACUS *(to Xanthias)*. D'you hear him?

XANTHIAS. Yes. 'Tis all the better reason for beating him with rods, for, if he is a god, he will not feel the blows.

DIONYSUS *(to Xanthias)*.

But why, pray, since you also claim to be a god, should you not be beaten like myself?

XANTHIAS *(to Aeacus)*.

That's fair. Very well then, whichever of us two you first see crying and caring for the blows, him believe not to be a god.

AEACUS. 'Tis spoken like a brave fellow; you don't refuse what is right. Strip yourselves.

XANTHIAS. To do the thing fairly, how do you propose to act?

AEACUS. Oh! that's easy. I shall hit you one after the other.

XANTHIAS. Well thought of.

AEACUS. There! *(He strikes Xanthias.)*

XANTHIAS. Watch if you see me flinch.

AEACUS. I have already struck you.

XANTHIAS. No, you haven't.

AEACUS. Why, you have not felt it at all, I think. Now for t'other one.

DIONYSUS. Be quick about it.

AEACUS. But I have struck you.

DIONYSUS. Ah! I did not even sneeze. How is that?

AEACUS. I don't know; come, I will return to the first one.

XANTHIAS. Get it over. Oh, oh!

AEACUS. What does that "oh, oh!" mean? Did it hurt you?

XANTHIAS. Oh, no! but I was thinking of the feasts of Heracles, which are being held at Diomeia.

AEACUS. Oh! what a pious fellow! I pass on to the other again.

DIONYSUS. Oh! oh!

AEACUS. What's wrong?

DIONYSUS. I see some knights.

AEACUS. Why are you weeping?

DIONYSUS. Because I can smell onions.

AEACUS. Ha! so you don't care a fig for the blows?

DIONYSUS. Not the least bit in the world.

AEACUS. Well, let us proceed. Your turn now.

XANTHIAS. Oh, I say!

AEACUS. What's the matter?

XANTHIAS. Pull out this thorn.

AEACUS. What? Now the other one again.

DIONYSUS. "Oh, Apollo!… King of Delos and Delphi!"

XANTHIAS. He felt that. Do you hear?

DIONYSUS. Why, no! I was quoting an iambic of Hipponax.

XANTHIAS. 'Tis labour in vain. Come, smite his flanks.

AEACUS. No, present your belly.

DIONYSUS. Oh, Posidon …

XANTHIAS. Ah! here's someone who's feeling it.

DIONYSUS. … who reignest on the Aegean headland and in the depths of the azure sea.

AEACUS. By Demeter, I cannot find out which of you is the god. But come in; the master and Persephoné will soon tell you, for they are gods themselves.

DIONYSUS. You are quite right; but you should have thought of that before you beat us.

CHORUS. Oh! Muse, take part in our sacred choruses; our songs will enchant you and you shall see a people of wise men, eager for a nobler glory than that of Cleophon, the braggart, the swallow, who deafens us with his hoarse cries, while perched upon a Thracian tree. He whines in his barbarian tongue and repeats the lament of Philomela with good reason, for even if the votes were equally divided, he would have to perish.

The sacred chorus owes the city its opinion and its wise lessons. First I demand that equality be restored among the citizens, so that none may be disquieted. If there be any whom the artifices of Phrynichus have drawn into any error, let us allow them to offer their excuses and let us forget these old mistakes. Furthermore, that there be not a single citizen in Athens who is deprived of his rights; otherwise would it not be shameful to see slaves become masters and treated as honourably as Plataeans, because they helped in a single naval fight? Not that I censure this step, for, on the contrary I approve it; 'tis the sole thing you have done that is sensible. But those citizens, both they and their fathers, have so often fought with you and are allied to you by ties of blood, so ought you not to listen to their prayers and pardon them their single fault? Nature has given you wisdom, therefore let your anger cool and let all those who have fought together on Athenian galleys live in brotherhood and as fellow-citizens, enjoying the same equal rights; to show ourselves proud and intractable about granting the rights of the city, especially at a time when we are riding at the mercy of the waves, is a folly, of which we shall later repent.

If I am adept at reading the destiny or the soul of a man, the fatal hour for little Cligenes is near, that unbearable ape, the greatest rogue of all the washermen, who use a mixture of ashes and Cimolian earth and call it potash. He knows it; hence he is always armed for war; for he fears, if he ventures forth without his bludgeon, he would be stripped of his clothes when he is drunk.

I have often noticed that there are good and honest citizens in Athens, who are as old gold is to new money. The ancient coins are excellent in point of standard; they are assuredly the best of all moneys; they alone are well struck and give a pure ring; everywhere they obtain currency, both in Greece and in strange lands; yet we make no use of them and prefer those bad copper pieces quite recently issued and so wretchedly struck. Exactly in the same way do we deal with our citizens. If we know them to be well-born, sober, brave, honest, adepts in the exercises of the gymnasium and in the liberal arts, they are the butts of our contumely and we have only a use for the petty rubbish, consisting of strangers,

slaves and low-born folk not worth a whit more, mushrooms of yesterday, whom formerly Athens would not have even wanted as scapegoats. Madmen, do change your ways at last; employ the honest men afresh; if you are fortunate through doing this, ‘twill be but right, and if Fate betrays you, the wise will at least praise you for having fallen honourably.

AEACUS. By Zeus, the Deliverer! what a brave man your master is.

XANTHIAS. A brave man! I should think so indeed, for he only knows how to drink and to make love!

AEACUS. He has convicted you of lying and did not thrash the impudent rascal who had dared to call himself the master.

XANTHIAS. Ah! he would have rued it if he had.

AEACUS. Well spoken! that’s a reply that does a slave credit; ’tis thus that I like to act too.

XANTHIAS. How, pray?

AEACUS. I am beside myself with joy, when I can curse my master in secret.

XANTHIAS. And when you go off grumbling, after having been well thrashed?

AEACUS. I am delighted.

XANTHIAS. And when you make yourself important?

AEACUS. I know of nothing sweeter.

XANTHIAS. Ah! by Zeus! we are brothers. And when you are listening to what your masters are saying?

AEACUS. ’Tis a pleasure that drives me to distraction.

XANTHIAS. And when you repeat it to strangers?

AEACUS. Oh! I feel as happy as if I were emitting semen.

XANTHIAS. By Phoebus Apollo! reach me your hand; come hither, that I may

embrace you; and, in the name of Zeus, the Thrashed one, tell me what all this noise means, these shouts, these quarrels, that I can hear going on inside yonder.

AEACUS. 'Tis Aeschylus and Euripides.

XANTHIAS. What do you mean?

AEACUS. The matter is serious, very serious indeed; all Hades is in commotion.

XANTHIAS. What's it all about?

AEACUS. We have a law here, according to which, whoever in each of the great sciences and liberal arts beats all his rivals, is fed at the Prytaneum and sits at Pluto's side …

XANTHIAS. I know that.

AEACUS. … until someone cleverer than he in the same style of thing comes along; then he has to give way to him.

XANTHIAS. And how has this law disturbed Aeschylus?

AEACUS. He held the chair for tragedy, as being the greatest in his art.

XANTHIAS. And who has it now?

AEACUS. When Euripides descended here, he started reciting his verses to the cheats, cut-purses, parricides, and brigands, who abound in Hades; his supple and tortuous reasonings filled them with enthusiasm, and they pronounced him the cleverest by far. So Euripides, elated with pride, took possession of the throne on which Aeschylus was installed.

XANTHIAS. And did he not get stoned?

AEACUS. No, but the folk demanded loudly that a regular trial should decide to which of the two the highest place belonged.

XANTHIAS. What folk? this mob of rascals? *(Points to the spectators.)*

AEACUS. Their clamour reached right up to heaven.

XANTHIAS. And had Aeschylus not his friends too?

AEACUS. Good people are very scarce here, just the same as on earth.

XANTHIAS. What does Pluto reckon to do?

AEACUS. To open a contest as soon as possible; the two rivals will show their skill, and finally a verdict will be given.

XANTHIAS. What! has not Sophocles also claimed the chair then?

AEACUS. No, no! he embraced Aeschylus and shook his hand, when he came down; he could have taken the seat, for Aeschylus vacated it for him; but according to Clidemides, he prefers to act as his second; if Aeschylus triumphs, he will stay modestly where he is, but if not, he has declared that he will contest the prize with Euripides.

XANTHIAS. When is the contest to begin?

AEACUS. Directly! the battle royal is to take place on this very spot.
Poetry is to be weighed in the scales.

XANTHIAS. What? How can tragedy be weighed?

AEACUS. They will bring rulers and compasses to measure the words, and those forms which are used for moulding bricks, also diameter measures and wedges, for Euripides says he wishes to torture every verse of his rival's tragedies.

XANTHIAS. If I mistake not, Aeschylus must be in a rage.

AEACUS. With lowered head he glares fiercely like a bull.

XANTHIAS. And who will be the judge?

AEACUS. The choice was difficult; it was seen that there was a dearth of able men. Aeschylus took exception to the Athenians …

XANTHIAS. No doubt he thought there were too many thieves among them.

AEACUS. … and moreover believed them too light-minded to judge of a poet's

merits. Finally they fell back upon your master, because he understands tragic poetry. But let us go in; when the masters are busy, we must look out for blows!

CHORUS. Ah! what fearful wrath will be surging in his heart! what a roar there'll be when he sees the babbler who challenges him sharpening his teeth! how savagely his eyes will roll! What a battle of words like plumed helmets and waving crests hurling themselves against fragile outbursts and wretched parings! We shall see the ingenious architect of style defending himself against immense periods. Then, the close hairs of his thick mane all a-bristle, the giant will knit his terrible brow; he will pull out verses as solidly bolted together as the framework of a ship and will hurl them forth with a roar, while the pretty speaker with the supple and sharpened tongue, who weighs each syllable and submits everything to the lash of his envy, will cut this grand style to mincemeat and reduce to ruins this edifice erected by one good sturdy puff of breath.

EURIPIDES *(to Dionysus)*. Your advice is in vain, I shall not vacate the chair, for I contend I am superior to him.

DIONYSUS. Aeschylus, why do you keep silent? You understand what he says.

EURIPIDES. He is going to stand on his dignity first; 'tis a trick he never failed to use in his tragedies.

DIONYSUS. My dear fellow, a little less arrogance, please.

EURIPIDES. Oh! I know him for many a day. I have long had a thorough hold of his ferocious heroes, for his high-flown language and of the monstrous blustering words which his great, gaping mouth hurls forth thick and close without curb or measure.

AESCHYLUS. It is indeed you, the son of a rustic goddess, who dare to treat me thus, you, who only know how to collect together stupid sayings and to stitch the rags of your beggars? I shall make you rue your insults.

DIONYSUS. Enough said, Aeschylus, calm the wild wrath that is turning your heart into a furnace.

AESCHYLUS. No, not until I have clearly shown the true value of this impudent fellow with his lame men.

DIONYSUS. A lamb, a black lamb! Slaves, bring it quickly, the storm-cloud is about to burst.

AESCHYLUS. Shame on your Cretan monologues! Shame on the infamous nuptials that you introduce into the tragic art!

DIONYSUS. Curb yourself, noble Aeschylus, and as for you, my poor Euripides, be prudent, protect yourself from this hailstorm, or he may easily in his rage hit you full in the temple with some terrible word, that would let out your Telephus. Come, Aeschylus, no flying into a temper! discuss the question coolly; poets must not revile each other like market wenches. Why, you shout at the very outset and burst out like a pine that catches fire in the forest.

EURIPIDES. I am ready for the contest and don't flinch; let him choose the attack or the defence; let him discuss everything, the dialogue, the choruses, the tragic genius, Peleus, Aeolus, Meleager and especially Telephus.

DIONYSUS. And what do you propose to do, Aeschylus? Speak!

AESCHYLUS. I should have wished not to maintain a contest that is not equal or fair.

DIONYSUS. Why not fair?

AESCHYLUS. Because my poetry has outlived me, whilst his died with him and he can use it against me. However, I submit to your ruling.

DIONYSUS. Let incense and a brazier be brought, for I want to offer a prayer to the gods. Thanks to their favour, may I be able to decide between these ingenious rivals as a clever expert should! And do you sing a hymn in honour of the Muses.

CHORUS. Oh! ye chaste Muses, the daughters of Zeus, you who read the fine and subtle minds of thought-makers when they enter upon a contest of quibbles and tricks, look down on these two powerful athletes; inspire them, one with mighty words and the other with odds and ends of verses. Now the great mind contest is beginning.

DIONYSUS. And do you likewise make supplication to the gods before entering the lists.

AESCHYLUS. Oh, Demeter! who hast formed my mind, may I be able to prove myself worthy of thy Mysteries!

DIONYSUS. And you, Euripides, prove yourself meet to sprinkle incense on the brazier.

EURIPIDES. Thanks, but I sacrifice to other gods.

DIONYSUS. To private gods of your own, which you have made after your own image?

EURIPIDES. Why, certainly!

DIONYSUS. Well then, invoke your gods.

EURIPIDES. Oh! thou Aether, on which I feed, oh! thou Volubility of Speech, oh! Craftiness, oh! Subtle Scent! enable me to crush the arguments of my opponent.

CHORUS. We are curious to see upon what ground these clever tilters are going to measure each other. Their tongue is keen, their wit is ready, their heart is full of audacity. From the one we must expect both elegance and polish of language, whereas the other, armed with his ponderous words, will fall hip and thigh upon his foe and with a single blow tear down and scatter all his vain devices.

DIONYSUS. Come, be quick and speak and let your words be elegant, but without false imagery or platitude.

EURIPIDES. I shall speak later of my poetry, but I want first to prove that Aeschylus is merely a wretched impostor; I shall relate by what means he tricked a coarse audience, trained in the school of Phrynichus. First one saw some seated figure, who was veiled, some Achilles or Niobé, who then strutted about the stage, but neither uncovered their face nor uttered a syllable.

DIONYSUS. I' faith! that's true!

EURIPIDES. Meanwhile, the Chorus would pour forth as many as four tirades one after the other, without stopping, and the characters would still maintain their stony silence.

DIONYSUS. I liked their silence, and these mutes pleased me no less than those characters that have such a heap to say nowadays.

EURIPIDES. ’Tis because you were a fool, understand that well.

DIONYSUS. Possibly; but what was his object?

EURIPIDES. ’Twas pure quackery; in this way the spectator would sit motionless, waiting, waiting for Niobé to say something, and the piece would go running on.

DIONYSUS. Oh! the rogue! how he deceived me! Well, Aeschylus, why are you so restless? Why this impatience, eh?

EURIPIDES. ’Tis because he sees himself beaten. Then when he had rambled on well, and got half-way through the piece, he would spout some dozen big, blustering, winged words, tall as mountains, terrible scarers, which the spectator admired without understanding what they meant.

DIONYSUS. Oh! great gods!

AESCHYLUS. Silence!

EURIPIDES. There was no comprehending one word.

DIONYSUS *(to Aeschylus)*. Don’t grind your teeth.

EURIPIDES. There were Scamanders, abysses, griffins with eagles’ beaks chiselled upon brazen bucklers, all words with frowning crests and hard, hard to understand.

DIONYSUS. ‘Faith, I was kept awake almost an entire night, trying to think out his yellow bird, half cock and half horse.

AESCHYLUS. Why, fool, ’tis a device that is painted on the prow of a vessel.

DIONYSUS. Ah! I actually thought ’twas Eryxis, the son of Philoxenus.

EURIPIDES. But what did you want with a cock in tragedy?

AESCHYLUS. But you, you foe of the gods, what have you done that is so good?

EURIPIDES. Oh! I have not made horses with cocks' heads like you, nor goats with deer's horns, as you may see 'em on Persian tapestries; but, when I received tragedy from your hands, it was quite bloated with enormous, ponderous words, and I began by lightening it of its heavy baggage and treated it with little verses, with subtle arguments, with the sap of white beet and decoctions of philosophical folly, the whole being well filtered together; then I fed it with monologues, mixing in some Cephisophon; but I did not chatter at random nor mix in any ingredients that first came to hand; from the outset I made my subject clear, and told the origin of the piece.

AESCHYLUS. Well, that was better than telling your own.

EURIPIDES. Then, starting with the very first verse, each character played his part; all spoke, both woman and slave and master, young girl and old hag.

AESCHYLUS. And was not such daring deserving of death?

EURIPIDES. No, by Apollo! 'twas to please the people.

DIONYSUS. Oh! leave that alone, do; 'tis not the best side of your case.

EURIPIDES. Furthermore, I taught the spectators the art of speech …

AESCHYLUS. 'Tis true indeed! Would that you had burst before you did it!

EURIPIDES. … the use of the straight lines and of the corners of language, the science of thinking, of reading, of understanding, plotting, loving deceit, of suspecting evil, of thinking of everything….

AESCHYLUS. Oh! true, true again!

EURIPIDES. I introduced our private life upon the stage, our common habits; and 'twas bold of me, for everyone was at home with these and could be my critic; I did not burst out into big noisy words to prevent their comprehension; nor did I terrify the audience by showing them Cycni and Memnons on chariots harnessed with steeds and jingling bells. Look at his disciples and look at mine. His are Phormisius and Megaenetus of Magnesia, all a-bristle with long beards,

spears and trumpets, and grinning with sardonic and ferocious laughter, while my disciples are Clitophon and the graceful Theramenes.

DIONYSUS. Theramenes? An able man and ready for anything; a man, who in imminent dangers knew well how to get out of the scrape by saying he was from Chios and not from Ceos.

EURIPIDES. 'Tis thus that I taught my audience how to judge, namely, by introducing the art of reasoning and considering into tragedy. Thanks to me, they understand everything, discern all things, conduct their households better and ask themselves, "What is to be thought of this? Where is that? Who has taken the other thing?"

DIONYSUS. Yes, certainly, and now every Athenian who returns home, bawls to his slaves, "Where is the stew-pot? Who has eaten off the sprat's head? Where is the clove of garlic that was left over from yesterday? Who has been nibbling at my olives?" Whereas formerly they kept their seats with mouths agape like fools and idiots.

CHORUS. You hear him, illustrious Achilles, and what are you going to reply? Only take care that your rage does not lead you astray, for he has handled you brutally. My noble friend, don't get carried away; furl all your sails, except the top-gallants, so that your ship may only advance slowly, until you feel yourself driven forward by a soft and favourable wind. Come then, you who were the first of the Greeks to construct imposing monuments of words and to raise the old tragedy above childish trifling, open a free course to the torrent of your words.

AESCHYLUS. This contest rouses my gall; my heart is boiling over with wrath. Am I bound to dispute with this fellow? But I will not let him think me unarmed and helpless. So, answer me! what is it in a poet one admires?

EURIPIDES. Wise counsels, which make the citizens better.

AESCHYLUS. And if you have failed in this duty, if out of honest and pure-minded men you have made rogues, what punishment do you think is your meet?

DIONYSUS. Death. I will reply for him.

AESCHYLUS. Behold then what great and brave men I bequeathed to him! They did not shirk the public burdens; they were not idlers, rogues and cheats, as

they are to-day; their very breath was spears, pikes, helmets with white crests, breastplates and greaves; they were gallant souls encased in seven folds of ox-leather.

EURIPIDES. I must beware! he will crush me beneath the sheer weight of his hail of armour.

DIONYSUS. And how did you teach them this bravery? Speak, Aeschylus, and don't display so much haughty swagger.

AESCHYLUS. By composing a drama full of the spirit of Ares.

DIONYSUS. Which one?

AESCHYLUS. The Seven Chiefs before Thebes. Every man who had once seen it longed to be marching to battle.

DIONYSUS. And you did very wrongly; through you the Thebans have become more warlike; for this misdeed you deserve to be well beaten.

AESCHYLUS. You too might have trained yourself, but you were not willing. Then, by producing 'The Persae,' I have taught you to conquer all your enemies; 'twas my greatest work.

DIONYSUS. Aye, I shook with joy at the announcement of the death of Darius; and the Chorus immediately clapped their hands and shouted, "Triumph!"

AESCHYLUS. Those are the subjects that poets should use. Note how useful, even from remotest times, the poets of noble thought have been! Orpheus taught us the mystic rites and the horrid nature of murder; Musaeus, the healing of ailments and the oracles; Hesiod, the tilling of the soil and the times for delving and harvest. And does not divine Homer owe his immortal glory to his noble teachings? Is it not he who taught the warlike virtues, the art of fighting and of carrying arms?

DIONYSUS. At all events he has not taught it to Pantacles, the most awkward of all men; t'other day, when he was directing a procession, 'twas only after he had put on his helmet that he thought of fixing in the crest.

AESCHYLUS. But he has taught a crowd of brave warriors, such as Lamachus, the hero of Athens. 'Tis from Homer that I borrowed the Patrocli and the lion-hearted Teucers, whom I revived to the citizens, to incite them to show themselves worthy of these illustrious examples when the trumpets sounded. But I showed them neither Sthenoboea nor shameless Phaedra; and I don't remember ever having placed an amorous woman on the stage.

EURIPIDES. No, no, you have never known Aphrodité.

AESCHYLUS. And I am proud of it. Whereas with you and those like you, she appears everywhere and in every shape; so that even you yourself were ruined and undone by her.

DIONYSUS. That's true; the crimes you imputed to the wives of others, you suffered from in turn.

EURIPIDES. But, cursed man, what harm have my Sthenoboeas done to Athens?

AESCHYLUS. You are the cause of honest wives of honest citizens drinking hemlock, so greatly have your Bellerophons made them blush.

EURIPIDES. Why, did I invent the story of Phaedra?

AESCHYLUS. No, the story is true enough; but the poet should hide what is vile and not produce nor represent it on the stage. The schoolmaster teaches little children and the poet men of riper age. We must only display what is good.

EURIPIDES. And when you talk to us of towering mountains — Lycabettus and of the frowning Parnes — is that teaching us what is good? Why not use human language?

AESCHYLUS. Why, miserable man, the expression must always rise to the height of great maxims and of noble thoughts. Thus as the garment of the demi-gods is more magnificent, so also is their language more sublime. I ennobled the stage, while you have degraded it.

EURIPIDES. And how so, pray?

AESCHYLUS. Firstly you have dressed the kings in rags, so that they might

inspire pity.

EURIPIDES. Where's the harm?

AESCHYLUS. You are the cause why no rich man will now equip the galleys, they dress themselves in tatters, groan and say they are poor.

DIONYSUS. Aye, by Demeter! and he wears a tunic of fine wool underneath; and when he has deceived us with his lies, he may be seen turning up on the fish-market.

AESCHYLUS. Moreover, you have taught boasting and quibbling; the wrestling schools are deserted and the young fellows have submitted their arses to outrage, in order that they might learn to reel off idle chatter, and the sailors have dared to bandy words with their officers. In my day they only knew how to ask for their ship's-biscuit and to shout "Yo ho! heave ho!"

DIONYSUS. … and to let wind under the nose of the rower below them, to befoul their mate with filth and to steal when they went ashore. Nowadays they argue instead of rowing and the ship can travel as slow as she likes.

AESCHYLUS. Of what crimes is he not the author? Has he not shown us procurers, women who get delivered in the temples, have traffic with their brothers, and say that life is not life. 'Tis thanks to him that our city is full of scribes and buffoons, veritable apes, whose grimaces are incessantly deceiving the people; but there is no one left who knows how to carry a torch, so little is it practised.

DIONYSUS. I' faith, that's true! I almost died of laughter at the last Panathenaea at seeing a slow, fat, pale-faced fellow, who ran well behind all the rest, bent completely double and evidently in horrible pain. At the gate of the Ceramicus the spectators started beating his belly, sides, flanks and thighs; these slaps knocked so much wind out of him that it extinguished his torch and he hurried away.

CHORUS. 'Tis a serious issue and an important debate; the fight is proceeding hotly and its decision will be difficult; for, as violently as the one attacks, as cleverly and as subtly does the other reply. But don't keep always to the same ground; you are not at the end of your specious artifices. Make use of every trick you have, no matter whether it be old or new! Out with everything boldly, blunt

though it be; risk anything — that is smart and to the point. Perchance you fear that the audience is too stupid to grasp your subtleties, but be reassured, for that is no longer the case. They are all well-trained folk; each has his book, from which he learns the art of quibbling; such wits as they are happily endowed with have been rendered still keener through study. So have no fear! Attack everything, for you face an enlightened audience.

EURIPIDES. Let's take your prologues; 'tis the beginnings of this able poet's tragedies that I wish to examine at the outset. He was obscure in the description of his subjects.

DIONYSUS. And which prologue are you going to examine?

EURIPIDES. A lot of them. Give me first of all that of the
'Orestes.'

DIONYSUS. All keep silent, Aeschylus, recite.

AESCHYLUS. "Oh! Hermes of the nether world, whose watchful power executes the paternal bidding, be my deliverer, assist me, I pray thee. I come, I return to this land."

DIONYSUS. Is there a single word to condemn in that?

EURIPIDES. More than a dozen.

DIONYSUS. But there are but three verses in all.

EURIPIDES. And there are twenty faults in each.

DIONYSUS. Aeschylus, I beg you to keep silent; otherwise, besides these three iambics, there will be many more attacked.

AESCHYLUS. What? Keep silent before this fellow?

DIONYSUS. If you will take my advice.

EURIPIDES. He begins with a fearful blunder. Do you see the stupid thing?

DIONYSUS. Faith! I don't care if I don't.

AESCHYLUS. A blunder? In what way?

EURIPIDES. Repeat the first verse.

AESCHYLUS. “Oh! Hermes of the nether world, whose watchful power executes the paternal bidding.”

EURIPIDES. Is not Orestes speaking in this fashion before his father’s tomb?

AESCHYLUS. Agreed.

EURIPIDES. Does he mean to say that Hermes had watched, only that Agamemnon should perish at the hands of a woman and be the victim of a criminal intrigue?

AESCHYLUS. ’Tis not to the god of trickery, but to Hermes the benevolent, that he gives the name of god of the nether world, and this he proves by adding that Hermes is accomplishing the mission given him by his father.

EURIPIDES. The blunder is even worse than I had thought to make it out; for if he holds his office in the nether world from his father….

DIONYSUS. It means his father has made him a grave-digger.

AESCHYLUS. Dionysus, your wine is not redolent of perfume.

DIONYSUS. Continue, Aeschylus, and you, Euripides, spy out the faults as he proceeds.

AESCHYLUS. “Be my deliverer, assist me, I pray thee. I come, I return to this land.”

EURIPIDES. Our clever Aeschylus says the very same thing twice over.

AESCHYLUS. How twice over?

EURIPIDES. Examine your expressions, for I am going to show you the repetition. “I come, I return to this land.” But I *come* is the same thing as I *return.*

DIONYSUS. Undoubtedly. ’Tis as though I said to my neighbour, “Lend me

either your kneading-trough or your trough to knead in."

AESCHYLUS. No, you babbler, no, 'tis not the same thing, and the verse is excellent.

DIONYSUS. Indeed! then prove it.

AESCHYLUS. To come is the act of a citizen who has suffered no misfortune; but the exile both comes and returns.

DIONYSUS. Excellent! by Apollo! What do you say to that, Euripides?

EURIPIDES. I say that Orestes did not return to his country, for he came there secretly, without the consent of those in power.

DIONYSUS. Very good indeed! by Hermes! only I have not a notion what it is you mean.

EURIPIDES. Go on.

DIONYSUS. Come, be quick, Aeschylus, continue; and you look out for the faults.

AESCHYLUS. "At the foot of this tomb I invoke my father and beseech him to hearken to me and to hear."

EURIPIDES. Again a repetition, to hearken and to hear are obviously the same thing.

DIONYSUS. Why, wretched man, he's addressing the dead, whom to call thrice even is not sufficient.

AESCHYLUS. And you, how do you form your prologues?

EURIPIDES. I am going to tell you, and if you find a repetition, an idle word or inappropriate, let me be scouted!

DIONYSUS. Come, speak; 'tis my turn to listen. Let us hear the beauty of your prologues,

EURIPIDES. "Oedipus was a fortunate man at first …"

AESCHYLUS. Not at all; he was destined to misfortune before he even existed, since Apollo predicted he would kill his father before ever he was born. How can one say he was fortunate at first?

EURIPIDES. "… and he became the most unfortunate of mortals afterwards."

AESCHYLUS. No, he did not become so, for he never ceased being so. Look at the facts! First of all, when scarcely born, he is exposed in the middle of winter in an earthenware vessel, for fear he might become the murderer of his father, if brought up; then he came to Polybus with his feet swollen; furthermore, while young, he marries an old woman, who is also his mother, and finally he blinds himself.

DIONYSUS. 'Faith! I think he could not have done worse to have been a colleague of Erasinidas.

EURIPIDES. You can chatter as you will, my prologues are very fine.

AESCHYLUS. I will take care not to carp at them verse by verse and word for word; but, an it please the gods, a simple little bottle will suffice me for withering every one of your prologues.

EURIPIDES. You will wither my prologues with a little bottle?

AESCHYLUS. With only one. You make verses of such a kind, that one can adapt what one will to your iambics: a little bit of fluff, a little bottle, a little bag. I am going to prove it.

EURIPIDES. You will prove it?

AESCHYLUS. Yes.

DIONYSUS. Come, recite.

EURIPIDES. "Aegyptus, according to the most widely spread reports, having landed at Argos with his fifty daughters …"

AESCHYLUS. … lost his little bottle.

EURIPIDES. What little bottle? May the plague seize you!

DIONYSUS. Recite another prologue to him. We shall see.

EURIPIDES. “Dionysus, who leads the choral dance on Parnassus with the thyrsus in his hand and clothed in skins of fawns …”

AESCHYLUS. … lost his little bottle.

DIONYSUS. There again his little bottle upsets us.

EURIPIDES. He won’t bother us much longer. I have a certain prologue to which he cannot adapt his tag: “There is no perfect happiness; this one is of noble origin, but poor; another of humble birth …”

AESCHYLUS. … lost his little bottle.

DIONYSUS. Euripides!

EURIPIDES. What’s the matter?

DIONYSUS. Clue up your sails, for this damned little bottle is going to blow a gale.

EURIPIDES. Little I care, by Demeter! I am going to make it burst in his hands.

DIONYSUS. Then out with it; recite another prologue, but beware, beware of the little bottle.

EURIPIDES. “Cadmus, the son of Agenor, while leaving the city of
Sidon …”

AESCHYLUS. … lost his little bottle.

DIONYSUS. Oh! my poor friend; buy that bottle, do, for it is going to tear all your prologues to ribbons.

EURIPIDES. What? Am I to buy it of him?

DIONYSUS. If you take my advice.

EURIPIDES. No, not I, for I have many prologues to which he cannot possibly fit his catchword: “Pelops, the son of Tantalus, having started for Pisa on his

swift chariot …"

AESCHYLUS. … lost his little bottle.

DIONYSUS. D'ye see? Again he has popped in his little bottle. Come, Aeschylus, he is going to buy it of you at any price, and you can have a splendid one for an obolus.

EURIPIDES. By Zeus, no, not yet! I have plenty of other prologues.
"Oeneus in the fields one day …"

AESCHYLUS. … lost his little bottle.

EURIPIDES. Let me first finish the opening verse: "Oeneus in the fields one day, having made an abundant harvest and sacrificed the first-fruits to the gods …"

AESCHYLUS. … lost his little bottle.

DIONYSUS. During the sacrifice? And who was the thief?

EURIPIDES. Allow him to try with this one: "Zeus, as even Truth has said …"

DIONYSUS *(to Euripides)*. You have lost again; he is going to say, "lost his little bottle," for that bottle sticks to your prologues like a ringworm. But, in the name of the gods, turn now to his choruses.

EURIPIDES. I will prove that he knows nothing of lyric poetry, and that he repeats himself incessantly.

CHORUS. What's he going to say now? I am itching to know what criticisms he is going to make on the poet, whose sublime songs so far outclass those of his contemporaries. I cannot imagine with what he is going to reproach the king of the Dionysia, and I tremble for the aggressor.

EURIPIDES. Oh! those wonderful songs! But watch carefully, for I am going to condense them all into a single one.

DIONYSUS. And I am going to take pebbles to count the fragments.

EURIPIDES. “Oh, Achilles, King of Phthiotis, hearken to the shout of the conquering foe and haste to sustain the assault. We dwellers in the marshes do honour to Hermes, the author of our race. Haste to sustain the assault.”

DIONYSUS. There, Aeschylus, you have already two assaults against you.

EURIPIDES. “Oh, son of Atreus, the most illustrious of the Greeks, thou, who rulest so many nations, hearken to me. Haste to the assault.”

DIONYSUS. A third assault. Beware, Aeschylus.

EURIPIDES. “Keep silent, for the inspired priestesses are opening the temple of Artemis. Haste to sustain the assault. I have the right to proclaim that our warriors are leaving under propitious auspices. Haste to sustain the assault.”

DIONYSUS. Great gods, what a number of assaults! my kidneys are quite swollen with fatigue; I shall have to go to the bath after all these assaults.

EURIPIDES. Not before you have heard this other song arranged for the music of the cithara.

DIONYSUS. Come then, continue; but, prithee, no more “assaults.”

EURIPIDES. “What! the two powerful monarchs, who reign over the Grecian youth, phlattothrattophlattothrat, are sending the Sphinx, that terrible harbinger of death, phlattothrattophlattothrat. With his avenging arm bearing a spear, phlattothrattophlattothrat, the impetuous bird delivers those who lean to the side of Ajax, phlattothrattophlattothrat, to the dogs who roam in the clouds, phlattothrattophlattothrat.”

DIONYSUS *(to Aeschylus)*. What is this ‘phlattothrat’? Does it come from Marathon or have you picked it out of some labourer’s chanty?

AESCHYLUS. I took what was good and improved it still more, so that I might not be accused of gathering the same flowers as Phrynichus in the meadow of the Muse. But this man borrows from everybody, from the suggestions of prostitutes, from the sons of Melitus, from the Carian flute-music, from wailing women, from dancing-girls. I am going to prove it, so let a lyre be brought. But what need of a lyre in his case? Where is the girl with the castanets? Come, thou Muse of Euripides; ’tis quite thy business to accompany songs of this sort.

DIONYSUS. This Muse has surely done fellation in her day, like a Lesbian wanton.

AESCHYLUS. “Ye halcyons, who twitter over the ever-flowing billows of the sea, the damp dew of the waves glistens on your wings; and you spiders, who we-we-we-we-we-weave the long woofs of your webs in the corners of our houses with your nimble feet like the noisy shuttle, there where the dolphin by bounding in the billows, under the influence of the flute, predicts a favourable voyage; thou glorious ornaments of the vine, the slender tendrils that support the grape. Child, throw thine arms about my neck.” Do you note the harmonious rhythm?

DIONYSUS. Yes.

AESCHYLUS. Do you note it?

DIONYSUS. Yes, undoubtedly.

AESCHYLUS. And does the author of such rubbish dare to criticize my songs? he, who imitates the twelve postures of Cyrené in his poetry? There you have his lyric melodies, but I still want to give you a sample of his monologues. “Oh! dark shadows of the night! what horrible dream are you sending me from the depths of your sombre abysses! Oh! dream, thou bondsman of Pluto, thou inanimate soul, child of the dark night, thou dread phantom in long black garments, how bloodthirsty, bloodthirsty is thy glance! how sharp are thy claws! Handmaidens, kindle the lamp, draw up the dew of the rivers in your vases and make the water hot; I wish to purify myself of this dream sent me by the gods. Oh! king of the ocean, that’s right, that’s right! Oh! my comrades, behold this wonder. Glycé has robbed me of my cock and has fled. Oh, Nymphs of the mountains! oh! Mania! seize her! How unhappy I am! I was full busy with my work, I was sp-sp-sp-sp-spinning the flax that was on my spindle, I was rounding off the clew that I was to go and sell in the market at dawn; and he flew off, flew off, cleaving the air with his swift wings; he left to me nothing but pain, pain! What tears, tears, poured, poured from my unfortunate eyes! Oh! Cretans, children of Ida, take your bows; help me, haste hither, surround the house. And thou, divine huntress, beautiful Artemis, come with thy hounds and search through the house. And thou also, daughter of Zeus, seize the torches in thy ready hands and go before me to Glycé’s home, for I propose to go there and rummage everywhere.”

DIONYSUS. That's enough of choruses.

AESCHYLUS. Yes, faith, enough indeed! I wish now to see my verses weighed in the scales; 'tis the only way to end this poetic struggle.

DIONYSUS. Well then, come, I am going to sell the poet's genius the same way cheese is sold in the market.

CHORUS. Truly clever men are possessed of an inventive mind. Here again is a new idea that is marvellous and strange, and which another would not have thought of; as for myself I would not have believed anyone who had told me of it, I would have treated him as a driveller.

DIONYSUS. Come, hither to the scales.

AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES. Here we are.

DIONYSUS. Let each one hold one of the scales, recite a verse, and not let go until I have cried, "Cuckoo!"

AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES. We understand.

DIONYSUS. Well then, recite and keep your hands on the scales.

EURIPIDES. "Would it had pleased the gods that the vessel Argo had never unfurled the wings of her sails!"

AESCHYLUS. "Oh! river Sperchius! oh! meadows, where the oxen graze!"

DIONYSUS. Cuckoo! let go! Oh! the verse of Aeschylus sinks far the lower of the two.

EURIPIDES. And why?

DIONYSUS. Because, like the wool-merchants, who moisten their wares, he has thrown a river into his verse and has made it quite wet, whereas yours was winged and flew away.

EURIPIDES. Come, another verse! You recite, Aeschylus, and you, weigh.

DIONYSUS. Hold the scales again.

AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES. Ready.

DIONYSUS *(to Euripides)*. You begin.

EURIPIDES. “Eloquence is Persuasion’s only sanctuary.”

AESCHYLUS. “Death is the only god whom gifts cannot bribe.”

DIONYSUS. Let go! let go! Here again our friend Aeschylus’ verse drags down the scale; ’tis because he has thrown in Death, the weightiest of all ills.

EURIPIDES. And I Persuasion; my verse is excellent.

DIONYSUS. Persuasion has both little weight and little sense. But hunt again for a big weighty verse and solid withal, that it may assure you the victory.

EURIPIDES. But where am I to find one — where?

DIONYSUS. I’ll tell you one: “Achilles has thrown two and four.”
Come, recite! ’tis the last trial.

EURIPIDES. “With his arm he seized a mace, studded with iron.”

AESCHYLUS. “Chariot upon chariot and corpse upon corpse.”

DIONYSUS *(to Euripides)* There you’re foiled again.

EURIPIDES. Why?

DIONYSUS. There are two chariots and two corpses in the verse; why, ’tis a weight a hundred Egyptians could not lift.

AESCHYLUS. ’Tis no longer verse against verse that I wish to weigh, but let him clamber into the scale himself, he, his children, his wife, Cephisophon and all his works; against all these I will place but two of my verses on the other side.

DIONYSUS. I will *not* be their umpire, for they are dear to me and I will not have a foe in either of them; meseems the one is mighty clever, while the other simply delights me.

PLUTO. Then you are foiled in the object of your voyage.

DIONYSUS. And if I do decide?

PLUTO. You shall take with you whichever of the twain you declare the victor; thus you will not have come in vain.

DIONYSUS. That's all right! Well then, listen; I have come down to find a poet.

EURIPIDES. And with what intent?

DIONYSUS. So that the city, when once it has escaped the imminent dangers of the war, may have tragedies produced. I have resolved to take back whichever of the two is prepared to give good advice to the citizens. So first of all, what think you of Alcibiades? For the city is in most difficult labour over this question.

EURIPIDES. And what does it think about it?

DIONYSUS. What does it think? It regrets him, hates him, and yet wishes to have him, all at the same time. But tell me your opinion, both of you.

EURIPIDES. I hate the citizen who is slow to serve his country, quick to involve it in the greatest troubles, ever alert to his own interests, and a bungler where those of the State are at stake.

DIONYSUS. That's good, by Posidon! And you, what is your opinion?

AESCHYLUS. A lion's whelp should not be reared within the city. No doubt that's best; but if the lion has been reared, one must submit to his ways.

DIONYSUS. Zeus, the Deliverer! this puzzles me greatly. The one is clever, the other clear and precise. Now each of you tell me your idea of the best way to save the State.

EURIPIDES. If Cinesias were fitted to Cleocritus as a pair of wings, and the wind were to carry the two of them across the waves of the sea …

DIONYSUS. 'Twould be funny. But what is he driving at?

EURIPIDES. … they could throw vinegar into the eyes of the foe in the event of

a sea-fight. But I know something else I want to tell you.

DIONYSUS. Go on.

EURIPIDES. When we put trust in what we mistrust and mistrust what we trust….

DIONYSUS. What? I don't understand. Tell us something less profound, but clearer.

EURIPIDES. If we were to mistrust the citizens, whom we trust, and to employ those whom we to-day neglect, we should be saved. Nothing succeeds with us; very well then, let's do the opposite thing, and our deliverance will be assured.

DIONYSUS. Very well spoken. You are the most ingenious of men, a true Palamedes! Is this fine idea your own or is it Cephisophon's?

EURIPIDES. My very own, — bar the vinegar, which is Cephisophon's.

DIONYSUS *(to Aeschylus)*. And you, what have you to say?

AESCHYLUS. Tell me first who the commonwealth employs. Are they the just?

DIONYSUS. Oh! she holds *them* in abhorrence.

AESCHYLUS. What, are then the wicked those she loves?

DIONYSUS. Not at all, but she employs them against her will.

AESCHYLUS. Then what deliverance can there be for a city that will neither have cape nor cloak?

DIONYSUS. Discover, I adjure you, discover a way to save her from shipwreck.

AESCHYLUS. I will tell you the way on earth, but I won't here.

DIONYSUS. No, send her this blessing from here.

AESCHYLUS. They will be saved when they have learnt that the land of the foe is theirs and their own land belongs to the foe; that their vessels are their true wealth, the only one upon which they can rely.

DIONYSUS. That's true, but the dicasts devour everything.

PLUTO *(to Dionysus)*. Now decide.

DIONYSUS. 'Tis for you to decide, but I choose him whom my heart prefers.

EURIPIDES. You called the gods to witness that you would bear me through; remember your oath and choose your friends.

DIONYSUS. Yes, "my tongue has sworn." … But I choose Aeschylus.

EURIPIDES. What have you done, you wretch?

DIONYSUS. I? I have decided that Aeschylus is the victor. What then?

EURIPIDES. And you dare to look me in the face after such a shameful deed?

DIONYSUS. "Why shameful, if the spectators do not think so?"

EURIPIDES. Cruel wretch, will you leave me pitilessly among the dead?

DIONYSUS. "Who knows if living be not dying, if breathing be not feasting, if sleep be not a fleece?"

PLUTO. Enter my halls. Come, Dionysus.

DIONYSUS. What shall we do there?

PLUTO. I want to entertain my guests before they leave.

DIONYSUS. Well said, by Zeus; 'tis the very thing to please me best.

CHORUS. Blessed the man who has perfected wisdom! Everything is happiness for him. Behold Aeschylus; thanks to the talent, to the cleverness he has shown, he returns to his country; and his fellow-citizens, his relations, his friends will all hail his return with joy. Let us beware of jabbering with Socrates and of disdaining the sublime notes of the tragic Muse. To pass an idle life reeling off grandiloquent speeches and foolish quibbles, is the part of a madman.

PLUTO. Farewell, Aeschylus! Go back to earth and may your noble precepts both save our city and cure the mad; there are such, a many of them! Carry this

rope from me to Cleophon, this one to Myrmex and Nichomachus, the public receivers, and this other one to Archenomous. Bid them come here at once and without delay; if not, by Apollo, I will brand them with the hot iron. I will make one bundle of them and Adimantus, the son of Leucolophus, and despatch the lot into hell with all possible speed.

AESCHYLUS. I will do your bidding, and do you make Sophocles occupy my seat. Let him take and keep it for me, against I should ever return here. In fact I award him the second place among the tragic poets. As for this impostor, watch that he never usurps my throne, even should he be placed there in spite of himself.

PLUTO *(to the Chorus of the Initiate)*. Escort him with your sacred torches, singing to him as you go his own hymns and choruses.

CHORUS. Ye deities of the nether world, grant a pleasant journey to the poet who is leaving us to return to the light of day; grant likewise wise and healthy thoughts to our city. Put an end to the fearful calamities that overwhelm us, to the awful clatter of arms. As for Cleophon and the likes of him, let them go, an it please them, and fight in their own land.

THE ASSEMBLYWOMEN

Anonymous translation for the Athenian Society, London, 1912

The Ἐκκλησιάζουσαι dates from 391 BC and like *Lysistrata* involves the theme of women and politics. The comedy concerns a group of women led by Praxagora, who has decided that the women must convince the men to give them control of Athens, because they could rule it better than has been done already. The women, disguised as men, sneak into the assembly and vote the measure, convincing some of the men to vote for it because it is the only thing they have not tried before. The women then institute a government where the state feeds, houses and generally takes care of every Athenian. They enforce an idea of equality by allowing every man to sleep with every woman, though the man must sleep with an ugly woman before he may sleep with a beautiful one.

The enforced equality presented in the play is something of a political statement in addition to being a social one. Following the oligarchy put in place after the war, Athenians asserted their democracy and equality very strongly, to the point that, while it was a clear exaggeration, the play surely made its position on excessive democracy clear. Therefore Aristophanes uses this drama to make fun of the socialist-like ideals in the form of the abolition of private property, abolition of the family and purely material prosperity.

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INTRODUCTION

The ‘Ecclesiazusae, or Women in Council,’ was not produced till twenty years after the preceding play, the ‘Thesmophoriazusae’ *(at the Great Dionysia of 392 B.C.)*, but is conveniently classed with it as being also largely levelled against the fair sex. “It is a broad, but very amusing, satire upon those ideal republics, founded upon communistic principles, of which Plato’s well-known treatise is the best example. His ‘Republic’ had been written, and probably delivered in the form of oral lectures at Athens, only two or three years before, and had no doubt excited a considerable sensation. But many of its most startling principles had long ago been ventilated in the Schools.”

Like the ‘Lysistrata,’ the play is a picture of woman’s ascendancy in the State, and the topsy-turvy consequences resulting from such a reversal of ordinary conditions. The women of Athens, under the leadership of the wise Praxagora, resolve to reform the constitution. To this end they don men’s clothes, and taking seats in the Assembly on the Pnyx, command a majority of votes and carry a series of revolutionary proposals — that the government be vested in a committee of women, and further, that property and women be henceforth held in common. The main part of the comedy deals with the many amusing difficulties that arise inevitably from this new state of affairs, the community of women above all necessitating special safeguarding clauses to secure the rights of the less attractive members of the sex to the service of the younger and handsomer men. Community of goods again, private property being abolished, calls for a regulation whereby all citizens are to dine at the public expense in the various public halls of the city, the particular place of each being determined by lot; and the drama winds up with one of these feasts, the elaborate menu of which is given in burlesque, and with the jubilations of the women over their triumph.

“This comedy appears to labour under the very same faults as the ‘Peace.’ The introduction, the secret assembly of the women, their rehearsal of their parts as men, the description of the popular assembly, are all handled in the most masterly manner; but towards the middle the action stands still. Nothing remains but the representation of the perplexities and confusion which arise from the new arrangements, especially in connection with the community of women, and from the prescribed equality of rights in love both for the old and ugly and for the young and beautiful. These perplexities are pleasant enough, but they turn too much on a repetition of the same joke.”

We learn from the text of the play itself that the ‘Ecclesiazusae’ was drawn by lot for first representation among the comedies offered for competition at the Festival, the Author making a special appeal to his audience not to let themselves be influenced unfavourably by the circumstance; but whether the play was successful in gaining a prize is not recorded.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PRAXAGORA.
BLEPYRUS, husband of Praxagora.
WOMEN.
A MAN.
CHREMES.
TWO CITIZENS.
HERALD.
AN OLD MAN.
A GIRL.
A YOUNG MAN.
THREE OLD WOMEN.
A SERVANT MAID.
HER MASTER.
CHORUS OF WOMEN.

SCENE: Before a house in a Public Square at Athens; a lamp is burning over the door. Time: a little after midnight.

THE ECCLESIAZUSAE

OR, THE ASSEMBLYWOMEN

PRAXAGORA *(enters carrying a lamp in her hand)*. Oh! thou shining light of my earthenware lamp, from this high spot shalt thou look abroad. Oh! lamp, I will tell thee thine origin and thy future; 'tis the rapid whirl of the potter's wheel that has lent thee thy shape, and thy wick counterfeits the glory of the sun; mayst thou send the agreed signal flashing afar! In thee alone do we confide, and thou art worthy, for thou art near us when we practise the various postures in which Aphrodité delights upon our couches, and none dream even in the midst of her sports of seeking to avoid thine eye that watches our swaying bodies. Thou alone shinest into the depths of our most secret charms, and with thy flame dost singe the hairy growth of our privates. If we open some cellar stored with fruits and wine, thou art our companion, and never dost thou betray or reveal to a neighbour the secrets thou hast learned about us. Therefore thou shalt know likewise the whole of the plot that I have planned with my friends, the women, at the festival of the Scirophoria.

I see none of those I was expecting, though dawn approaches; the Assembly is about to gather and we must take our seats in spite of Phyromachus, who forsooth would say, "It is meet the women sit apart and hidden from the eyes of the men." Why, have they not been able then to procure the false beards that they must wear, or to steal their husbands cloaks? Ah! I see a light approaching; let us draw somewhat aside, for fear it should be a man.

FIRST WOMAN. Let us start, it is high time; as we left our dwellings, the cock was crowing for the second time.

PRAXAGORA. And I have spent the whole night waiting for you. But come, let us call our neighbour by scratching at her door; and gently too, so that her husband may hear nothing.

SECOND WOMAN. I was putting on my shoes, when I heard you scratching, for I was not asleep, so there! Oh! my dear, my husband *(he is a Salaminian)* never left me an instant's peace, but was at me, for ever at me, all night long, so that it was only just now that I was able to filch his cloak.

FIRST WOMAN. I see Clinareté coming too, along with Sostraté and their next-door neighbour Philaeneté.

PRAXAGORA. Hurry yourselves then, for Glycé has sworn that the last comer shall forfeit three measures of wine and a *choenix* of pease.

FIRST WOMAN. Don't you see Melisticé, the wife of Smicythion, hurrying hither in her great shoes? Methinks she is the only one of us all who has had no trouble in getting rid of her husband.

SECOND WOMAN. And can't you see Gusistraté, the tavern-keeper's wife, with a lamp in her hand, and the wives of Philodoretus and Chaeretades?

PRAXAGORA. I can see many others too, indeed the whole of the flower of Athens.

THIRD WOMAN. Oh! my dear, I have had such trouble in getting away! My husband ate such a surfeit of sprats last evening that he was coughing and choking the whole night long.

PRAXAGORA. Take your seats, and, since you are all gathered here at last, let us see if what we decided on at the feast of the Scirophoria has been duly done.

FOURTH WOMAN. Yes. Firstly, as agreed, I have let the hair under my armpits grow thicker than a bush; furthermore, whilst my husband was at the Assembly, I rubbed myself from head to foot with oil and then stood the whole day long in the sun.

FIFTH WOMAN. So did I. I began by throwing away my razor, so that I might get quite hairy, and no longer resemble a woman.

PRAXAGORA. Have you the beards that we had all to get ourselves for the Assembly?

FOURTH WOMAN. Yea, by Hecaté! Is this not a fine one?

FIFTH WOMAN. Aye, much finer than Epicrates'.

PRAXAGORA *(to the other women)*. And you?

FOURTH WOMAN. Yes, yes; look, they all nod assent.

PRAXAGORA. I see that you have got all the rest too, Spartan shoes, staffs and men's cloaks, as 'twas arranged.

SIXTH WOMAN. I have brought Lamias' club, which I stole from him while he slept.

PRAXAGORA. What, the club that makes him puff and pant with its weight?

SIXTH WOMAN. By Zeus the Deliverer, if he had the skin of Argus, he would know better than any other how to shepherd the popular herd.

PRAXAGORA. But come, let us finish what has yet to be done, while the stars are still shining; the Assembly, at which we mean to be present, will open at dawn.

FIRST WOMAN. Good; you must take up your place at the foot of the platform and facing the Prytanes.

SIXTH WOMAN. I have brought this with me to card during the Assembly. *(She shows some wool.)* PRAXAGORA. During the Assembly, wretched woman?

SIXTH WOMAN. Aye, by Artemis! shall I hear any less well if I am doing a bit of carding? My little ones are all but naked.

PRAXAGORA. Think of her wanting to card! whereas we must not let anyone see the smallest part of our bodies. 'Twould be a fine thing if one of us, in the midst of the discussion, rushed on to the speaker's platform and, flinging her cloak aside, showed her hairy privates. If, on the other hand, we are the first to take our seats closely muffled in our cloaks, none will know us. Let us fix these beards on our chins, so that they spread all over our bosoms. How can we fail then to be mistaken for men? Agyrrhius has deceived everyone, thanks to the beard of Pronomus; yet he was no better than a woman, and you see how he now holds the first position in the city. Thus, I adjure you by this day that is about to dawn, let us dare to copy him and let us be clever enough to possess ourselves of the management of affairs. Let us save the vessel of State, which just at present none seems able either to sail or row.

SIXTH WOMAN. But where shall we find orators in an Assembly of women?

PRAXAGORA. Nothing simpler. Is it not said, that the cleverest speakers are those who submit themselves oftenest to men? Well, thanks to the gods, we are that by nature.

SIXTH WOMAN. There's no doubt of that; but the worst of it is our inexperience.

PRAXAGORA. That's the very reason we are gathered here, in order to prepare the speech we must make in the Assembly. Hasten, therefore, all you who know aught of speaking, to fix on your beards.

SEVENTH WOMAN. Oh! you great fool! is there ever a one among us cannot use her tongue?

PRAXAGORA. Come, look sharp, on with your beard and become a man. As for me, I will do the same in case I should have a fancy for getting on to the platform. Here are the chaplets.

SECOND WOMAN. Oh! great gods! my dear Praxagora, do look here! Is it not laughable?

PRAXAGORA. How laughable?

SECOND WOMAN. Our beards look like broiled cuttle-fishes.

PRAXAGORA. The priest is bringing in — the cat. Make ready, make ready! Silence, Ariphrades! Go and take your seat. Now, who wishes to speak?

SEVENTH WOMAN. I do.

PRAXAGORA. Then put on this chaplet and success be with you.

SEVENTH WOMAN. There, 'tis done!

PRAXAGORA. Well then! begin.

SEVENTH WOMAN. Before drinking?

PRAXAGORA. Hah! she wants to drink!

SEVENTH WOMAN. Why, what else is the meaning of this chaplet?

PRAXAGORA. Get you hence! you would probably have played us this trick also before the people.

SEVENTH WOMAN. Well! don't the men drink then in the Assembly?

PRAXAGORA. Now she's telling us the men drink!

SEVENTH WOMAN. Aye, by Artemis, and neat wine too. That's why their decrees breathe of drunkenness and madness. And why libations, why so many ceremonies, if wine plays no part in them? Besides, they abuse each other like drunken men, and you can see the archers dragging more than one uproarious drunkard out of the Agora.

PRAXAGORA. Go back to your seat, you are wandering.

SEVENTH WOMAN. Ah! I should have done better not to have muffled myself in this beard; my throat's afire and I feel I shall die of thirst.

PRAXAGORA. Who else wishes to speak?

EIGHTH WOMAN. I do.

PRAXAGORA. Quick then, take the chaplet, for time's running short. Try to speak worthily, let your language be truly manly, and lean on your staff with dignity.

EIGHTH WOMAN. I had rather have seen one of your regular orators giving you wise advice; but, as that is not to be, it behoves me to break silence; I cannot, for my part indeed, allow the tavern-keepers to fill up their wine-pits with water. No, by the two goddesses….

PRAXAGORA. What? by the two goddesses! Wretched woman, where are your senses?

EIGHTH WOMAN. Eh! what?… I have not asked you for a drink!

PRAXAGORA. No, but you want to pass for a man, and you swear by the two goddesses. Otherwise 'twas very well.

EIGHTH WOMAN. Well then. By Apollo….

PRAXAGORA. Stop! All these details of language must be adjusted; else it is quite useless to go to the Assembly.

SEVENTH WOMAN. Pass me the chaplet; I wish to speak again, for I think I have got hold of something good. You women who are listening to me….

PRAXAGORA. Women again; why, wretched creature, ’tis men that you are addressing.

SEVENTH WOMAN. ’Tis the fault of Epigonus; I caught sight of him over yonder, and I thought I was speaking to women.

PRAXAGORA. Come, withdraw and remain seated in future. I am going to take this chaplet myself and speak in your name. May the gods grant success to my plans!

My country is as dear to me as it is to you, and I groan, I am grieved at all that is happening in it. Scarcely one in ten of those who rule it is honest, and all the others are bad. If you appoint fresh chiefs, they will do still worse. It is hard to correct your peevish humour; you fear those who love you and throw yourselves at the feet of those who betray you. There was a time when we had no assemblies, and then we all thought Agyrrhius a dishonest man; now they are established, he who gets money thinks everything is as it should be, and he who does not, declares all who sell their votes to be worthy of death.

FIRST WOMAN. By Aphrodité, that is well spoken.

PRAXAGORA. Why, wretched woman, you have actually called upon Aphrodité.
Oh! what a fine thing ’twould have been had you said that in the Assembly!

FIRST WOMAN. I should never have done that!

PRAXAGORA. Well, mind you don’t fall into the habit. — When we were discussing the alliance, it seemed as though it were all over with Athens if it fell through. No sooner was it made than we were vexed and angry, and the orator who had caused its adoption was compelled to seek safety in flight. Is there talk

of equipping a fleet? The poor man says, yes, but the rich citizen and the countryman say, no. You were angered against the Corinthians and they with you; now they are well disposed towards you, be so towards them. As a rule the Argives are dull, but the Argive Hieronymus is a distinguished chief. Herein lies a spark of hope; but Thrasybulus is far from Athens and you do not recall him.

FIRST WOMAN. Oh! what a brilliant man!

PRAXAGORA. That's better! that's fitting applause. — Citizens, 'tis you who are the cause of all this trouble. You vote yourselves salaries out of the public funds and care only for your own personal interests; hence the State limps along like Aesimus. But if you hearken to me, you will be saved. I assert that the direction of affairs must be handed over to the women, for 'tis they who have charge and look after our households.

SECOND WOMAN. Very good, very good, 'tis perfect! Say on, say on.

PRAXAGORA. They are worth more than you are, as I shall prove. First of all they wash all their wool in warm water, according to the ancient practice; you will never see them changing their method. Ah! if Athens only acted thus, if it did not take delight in ceaseless innovations, would not its happiness be assured? Then the women sit down to cook, as they always did; they carry things on their head as was their wont; they keep the Thesmophoria, as they have ever done; they knead their cakes just as they used to; they make their husbands angry as they have always done; they receive their lovers in their houses as was their constant custom; they buy dainties as they always did; they love unmixed wine as well as ever; they delight in being loved just as much as they always have. Let us therefore hand Athens over to them without endless discussions, without bothering ourselves about what they will do; let us simply hand them over the power, remembering that they are mothers and will therefore spare the blood of our soldiers; besides, who will know better than a mother how to forward provisions to the front? Woman is adept at getting money for herself and will not easily let herself be deceived; she understands deceit too well herself. I omit a thousand other advantages. Take my advice and you will live in perfect happiness.

FIRST WOMAN. How beautiful this is, my dearest Praxagora, how clever! But where, pray, did you learn all these pretty things?

PRAXAGORA. When the countryfolk were seeking refuge in the city, I lived on the Pnyx with my husband, and there I learnt to speak through listening to the orators.

FIRST WOMAN. Then, dear, 'tis not astonishing that you are so eloquent and clever; henceforward you shall be our leader, so put your great ideas into execution. But if Cephalus belches forth insults against you, what answer will you give him in the Assembly?

PRAXAGORA. I shall say that he drivels.

FIRST WOMAN. But all the world knows that.

PRAXAGORA. I shall furthermore say that he is a raving madman.

FIRST WOMAN. There's nobody who does not know it.

PRAXAGORA. That he, as excellent a statesman as he is, is a clumsy tinker.

FIRST WOMAN. And if the blear-eyed Neoclides comes to insult you?

PRAXAGORA. To him I shall say, "Go and look at a dog's backside".

FIRST WOMAN. And if they fly at you?

PRAXAGORA. Oh! I shall shake them off as best I can; never fear, I know how to use this tool.

FIRST WOMAN. But there is one thing we don't think of. If the archers drag you away, what will you do?

PRAXAGORA. With my arms akimbo like this, I will never, never let myself be taken round the middle.

FIRST WOMAN. If they seize you, we will bid them let you go.

SECOND WOMAN. That's the best way. But how are we going to lift up our arm in the Assembly, we, who only know how to lift our legs in the act of love?

PRAXAGORA. 'Tis difficult; yet it must be done, and the arm shown naked to the shoulder in order to vote. Quick now, put on these tunics and these Laconian

shoes, as you see the men do each time they go to the Assembly or for a walk. Then this done, fix on your beards, and when they are arranged in the best way possible, dress yourselves in the cloaks you have abstracted from your husbands; finally start off leaning on your staffs and singing some old man's song as the villagers do.

SECOND WOMAN. Well spoken; and let us hurry to get to the Pnyx before the women from the country, for they will no doubt not fail to come there.

PRAXAGORA. Quick, quick, for 'tis all the custom that those who are not at the Pnyx early in the morning, return home empty-handed.

CHORUS. Move forward, citizens, move forward; let us not forget to give ourselves this name and may that of *woman* never slip out of our mouths; woe to us, if it were discovered that we had laid such a plot in the darkness of night. Let us go to the Assembly then, fellow-citizens; for the Thesmothetae have declared that only those who arrive at daybreak with haggard eye and covered with dust, without having snatched time to eat anything but a snack of garlic-pickle, shall alone receive the triobolus. Walk up smartly, Charitimides, Smicythus and Draces, and do not fail in any point of your part; let us first demand our fee and then vote for all that may perchance be useful for our partisans…. Ah! what am I saying? I meant to say, for our fellow-citizens. Let us drive away these men of the city, who used to stay at home and chatter round the table in the days when only an obolus was paid, whereas now one is stifled by the crowds at the Pnyx. No! during the Archonship of generous Myronides, none would have dared to let himself be paid for the trouble he spent over public business; each one brought his own meal of bread, a couple of onions, three olives and some wine in a little wine-skin. But nowadays we run here to earn the three obols, for the citizen has become as mercenary as the stonemason. *(The Chorus marches away.)* BLEPYRUS *(husband of Praxagora)*. What does this mean? My wife has vanished! it is nearly daybreak and she does not return! Wanting to relieve myself, lo! I awake and hunt in the darkness for my shoes and my cloak; but grope where I will, I cannot find them. Meanwhile my need grew each moment more urgent and I had only just time to seize my wife's little mantle and her Persian slippers. But where shall I find a spot suitable for my purpose. Bah! One place is as good as another at night-time, for no one will see me. Ah! what fatal folly 'twas to take a wife at my age, and how I could thrash myself for having acted so foolishly! 'Tis a certainty she's not gone out for any honest purpose. However, that's not our present business.

A MAN. Who's there? Is that not my neighbour Blepyrus? Why, yes, 'tis himself and no other. Tell me, what's all that yellow about you? Can it be Cinesias who has befouled you so?

BLEPYRUS. No, no, I only slipped on my wife's tunic to come out in.

MAN. And where is your cloak?

BLEPYRUS. I cannot tell you, for I hunted for it vainly on the bed.

MAN. And why did you not ask your wife for it?

BLEPYRUS. Ah! why indeed! because she is not in the house; she has run away, and I greatly fear that she may be doing me an ill turn.

MAN. But, by Posidon, 'tis the same with myself. My wife has disappeared with my cloak, and what is still worse, with my shoes as well, for I cannot find them anywhere.

BLEPYRUS. Nor can I my Laconian shoes; but as I had urgent need, I popped my feet into these slippers, so as not to soil my blanket, which is quite new.

MAN. What does it mean? Can some friend have invited her to a feast?

BLEPYRUS. I expect so, for she does not generally misconduct herself, as far as I know.

MAN. Come, I say, you seem to be making ropes. Are you never going to be done? As for myself, I would like to go to the Assembly, and it is time to start, but the thing is to find my cloak, for I have only one.

BLEPYRUS. I am going to have a look too, when I have done; but I really think there must be a wild pear obstructing my rectum.

MAN. Is it the one which Thrasybulus spoke about to the Lacedaemonians?

BLEPYRUS. Oh! oh! oh! how the obstruction holds! Whatever am I to do? 'Tis not merely for the present that I am frightened; but when I have eaten, where is it to find an outlet now? This cursed Achradusian fellow has bolted the door. Let a

doctor be fetched; but which is the cleverest in this branch of the science? Amynon? Perhaps he would not come. Ah! Antithenes! Let him be brought to me, cost what it will. To judge by his noisy sighs, that man knows what a rump wants, when in urgent need. Oh! venerated Ilithyia! I shall burst unless the door gives way. Have pity! pity! Let me not become the night-stool of the comic poets.

CHREMES. Hi! friend, what are you after there? Easing yourself!

BLEPYRUS. Oh! there! it is over and I can get up again at last.

CHREMES. What's this? You have your wife's tunic on.

BLEPYRUS. Aye, 'twas the first thing that came to my hand in the darkness. But where do you hail from?

CHREMES. From the Assembly.

BLEPYRUS. Is it already over then?

CHREMES. Certainly.

BLEPYRUS. Why, it is scarcely daylight.

CHREMES. I did laugh, ye gods, at the vermilion rope-marks that were to be seen all about the Assembly.

BLEPYRUS. Did you get the triobolus?

CHREMES. Would it had so pleased the gods! but I arrived just too late, and am quite ashamed of it; I bring back nothing but this empty wallet.

BLEPYRUS. But why is that?

CHREMES. There was a crowd, such as has never been seen at the Pnyx, and the folk looked pale and wan, like so many shoemakers, so white were they in hue; both I and many another had to go without the triobolus.

BLEPYRUS. Then if I went now, I should get nothing.

CHREMES. No, certainly not, nor even had you gone at the second cock-crow.

BLEPYRUS. Oh! what a misfortune! Oh, Antilochus! no triobolus! Even death would be better! I am undone! But what can have attracted such a crowd at that early hour?

CHREMES. The Prytanes started the discussion of measures nearly concerning the safety of the State; immediately, that blear-eyed fellow, the son of Neoclides, was the first to mount the platform. Then the folk shouted with their loudest voice, "What! he dares to speak, and that, too, when the safety of the State is concerned, and he a man who has not known how to save even his own eyebrows!" He, however, shouted louder than they all, and looking at them asked, "Why, what ought I to have done?"

BLEPYRUS. Pound together garlic and laserpitium juice, add to this mixture some Laconian spurge, and rub it well into the eyelids at night. That's what I should have answered, had I been there.

CHREMES. After him that clever rascal Evaeon began to speak; he was naked, so far as we all could see, but he declared he had a cloak; he propounded the most popular, the most democratic, doctrines. "You see," he said, "I have the greatest need of sixteen drachmae, the cost of a new cloak, my health demands it; nevertheless I wish first to care for that of my fellow-citizens and of my country. If the fullers were to supply tunics to the indigent at the approach of winter, none would be exposed to pleurisy. Let him who has neither beds nor coverlets go to sleep at the tanners' after taking a bath; and if they shut the door in winter, let them be condemned to give him three goat-skins."

BLEPYRUS. By Dionysus, a fine, a very fine notion! Not a soul will vote against his proposal, especially if he adds that the flour-sellers must supply the poor with three measures of corn, or else suffer the severest penalties of the law; 'tis only in this way that Nausicydes can be of any use to us.

CHREMES. Then we saw a handsome young man rush into the tribune, he was all pink and white like young Nicias, and he began to say that the direction of matters should be entrusted to the women; this the crowd of shoemakers began applauding with all their might, while the countryfolk assailed him with groans.

BLEPYRUS. And, 'faith, they did well.

CHREMES. But they were outnumbered, and the orator shouted louder than they, saying much good of the women and much ill of you.

BLEPYRUS. And what did he say?

CHREMES. First he said you were a rogue…

BLEPYRUS. And you?

CHREMES. Let me speak … and a thief….

BLEPYRUS. I alone?

CHREMES. And an informer.

BLEPYRUS. I alone?

CHREMES. Why, no, by the gods! all of us.

BLEPYRUS. And who avers the contrary?

CHREMES. He maintained that women were both clever and thrifty, that they never divulged the Mysteries of Demeter, while you and I go about babbling incessantly about whatever happens at the Senate.

BLEPYRUS. By Hermes, he was not lying!

CHREMES. Then he added, that the women lend each other clothes, trinkets of gold and silver, drinking-cups, and not before witnesses too, but all by themselves, and that they return everything with exactitude without ever cheating each other; whereas, according to him, we are ever ready to deny the loans we have effected.

BLEPYRUS. Aye, by Posidon, and in spite of witnesses.

CHREMES. Again, he said that women were not informers, nor did they bring lawsuits, nor hatch conspiracies; in short, he praised the women in every possible manner.

BLEPYRUS. And what was decided?

CHREMES. To confide the direction of affairs to them; ’tis the one and only innovation that has not yet been tried at Athens.

BLEPYRUS. And it was voted?

CHREMES. Yes.

BLEPYRUS. And everything that used to be the men's concern has been given over to the women?

CHREMES. You express it exactly.

BLEPYRUS. Thus 'twill be my wife who will go to the Courts now in my stead.

CHREMES. And it will be she who will keep your children in your place.

BLEPYRUS. I shall no longer have to tire myself out with work from daybreak onwards?

CHREMES. No, 'twill be the women's business, and you can stop at home and take your ease.

BLEPYRUS. Well, what I fear for us fellows now is, that, holding the reins of government, they will forcibly compel us …

CHREMES. To do what?

BLEPYRUS. … to work them.

CHREMES. And if we are not able?

BLEPYRUS. They will give us no dinner.

CHREMES. Well then, do your duty; dinner and love form a double enjoyment.

BLEPYRUS. Ah! but I hate compulsion.

CHREMES. But if it be for the public weal, let us resign ourselves. 'Tis an old saying, that our absurdest and maddest decrees always somehow turn out for our good. May it be so in this case, oh gods, oh venerable Pallas! But I must be off; so, good-bye to you!

BLEPYRUS. Good-bye, Chremes.

CHORUS. March along, go forward. Is there some man following us? Turn round, examine everywhere and keep a good look-out; be on your guard against every trick, for they might spy on us from behind. Let us make as much noise as possible as we tramp. It would be a disgrace for all of us if we allowed ourselves to be caught in this deed by the men. Come, wrap yourselves up well, and search both right and left, so that no mischance may happen to us. Let us hasten our steps; here we are close to the meeting-place, whence we started for the Assembly, and here is the house of our leader, the author of this bold scheme, which is now decreed by all the citizens. Let us not lose a moment in taking off our false beards, for we might be recognized and denounced. Let us stand under the shadow of this wall; let us glance round sharply with our eye to beware of surprises, while we quickly resume our ordinary dress. Ah! here is our leader, returning from the Assembly. Hasten to relieve your chins of these flowing manes. Look at your comrades yonder; they have already made themselves women again some while ago.

PRAXAGORA. Friends, success has crowned our plans. But off with these cloaks and these boots quick, before any man sees you; unbuckle the Laconian straps and get rid of your staffs; and do you help them with their toilet. As for myself, I am going to slip quietly into the house and replace my husband's cloak and other gear where I took them from, before he can suspect anything.

CHORUS. There! 'tis done according to your bidding. Now tell us how we can be of service to you, so that we may show you our obedience, for we have never seen a cleverer woman than you.

PRAXAGORA. Wait! I only wish to use the power given me in accordance with your wishes; for, in the marketplace, in the midst of the shouts and danger, I appreciated your indomitable courage.

BLEPYRUS. Eh, Praxagora! where do you come from?

PRAXAGORA. How does that concern you, friend?

BLEPYRUS. Why, greatly! what a silly question!

PRAXAGORA. You don't think I have come from a lover's?

BLEPYRUS. No, perhaps not from only one.

PRAXAGORA. You can make yourself sure of that.

BLEPYRUS. And how?

PRAXAGORA. You can see whether my hair smells of perfume.

BLEPYRUS. What? cannot a woman possibly be loved without perfume, eh!

PRAXAGORA. The gods forfend, as far as I am concerned.

BLEPYRUS. Why did you go off at early dawn with my cloak?

PRAXAGORA. A companion, a friend who was in labour, had sent to fetch me.

BLEPYRUS. Could you not have told me?

PRAXAGORA. Oh, my dear, would you have me caring nothing for a poor woman in that plight?

BLEPYRUS. A word would have been enough. There's something behind all this.

PRAXAGORA. No, I call the goddesses to witness! I went running off; the poor woman who summoned me begged me to come, whatever might betide.

BLEPYRUS. And why did you not take your mantle? Instead of that, you carry off mine, you throw your dress upon the bed and you leave me as the dead are left, bar the chaplets and perfumes.

PRAXAGORA. 'Twas cold, and I am frail and delicate; I took your cloak for greater warmth, leaving you thoroughly warm yourself beneath your coverlets.

BLEPYRUS. And my shoes and staff, those too went off with you?

PRAXAGORA. I was afraid they might rob me of the cloak, and so, to look like a man, I put on your shoes and walked with a heavy tread and struck the stones with your staff.

BLEPYRUS. D'you know you have made us lose a *sextary* of wheat, which I should have bought with the *triobolus* of the Assembly?

PRAXAGORA. Be comforted, for she had a boy.

BLEPYRUS. Who? the Assembly?

PRAXAGORA. No, no, the woman I helped. But has the Assembly taken place then?

BLEPYRUS. Did I not tell you of it yesterday?

PRAXAGORA. True; I remember now.

BLEPYRUS. And don't you know the decrees that have been voted?

PRAXAGORA. No indeed.

BLEPYRUS. Go to! you can eat cuttle-fish now, for 'tis said the government is handed over to you.

PRAXAGORA. To do what — to spin?

BLEPYRUS. No, that you may rule …

PRAXAGORA. What?

BLEPYRUS. … over all public business.

PRAXAGORA. Oh! by Aphrodité! how happy Athens will be!

BLEPYRUS. Why so?

PRAXAGORA. For a thousand reasons. None will dare now to do shameless deeds, to give false testimony or lay informations.

BLEPYRUS. Stop! in the name of the gods! Do you want me to die of hunger?

CHORUS. Good sir, let your wife speak.

PRAXAGORA. There will be no more thieves, nor envious people, no more rags nor misery, no more abuse and no more prosecutions and lawsuits.

BLEPYRUS. By Posidon! 'tis grand, if true.

PRAXAGORA. The results will prove it; you will confess it, and even these good people *(pointing to the spectators)* will not be able to say a word.

CHORUS. You have served your friends, but now it behoves you to apply your ability and your care to the welfare of the people. Devote the fecundity of your mind to the public weal; adorn the citizens' lives with a thousand enjoyments and teach them to seize every favourable opportunity. Devise some ingenious method to secure the much-needed salvation of Athens; but let neither your acts nor your words recall anything of the past, for 'tis only innovations that please. Don't delay the realization of your plans, for speedy execution is greatly esteemed by the public.

PRAXAGORA. I believe my ideas are good, but what I fear is, that the public will cling to the old customs and refuse to accept my reforms.

BLEPYRUS. Have no fear about that. Love of novelty and disdain for the past, these are the dominating principles among us.

PRAXAGORA. Let none contradict nor interrupt me until I have explained my plan. I want all to have a share of everything and all property to be in common; there will no longer be either rich or poor; no longer shall we see one man harvesting vast tracts of land, while another has not ground enough to be buried in, nor one man surround himself with a whole army of slaves, while another has not a single attendant; I intend that there shall only be one and the same condition of life for all.

BLEPYRUS. But how do you mean for all?

PRAXAGORA. Go and eat your excrements!

BLEPYRUS. Come, share and share alike!

PRAXAGORA. No, no, but you shall not interrupt me. This is what I was going to say: I shall begin by making land, money, everything that is private property, common to all. Then we shall live on this common wealth, which we shall take care to administer with wise thrift.

BLEPYRUS. And how about the man who has no land, but only gold and silver coins, that cannot be seen?

PRAXAGORA. He must bring them to the common stock, and if he fails he will be a perjured man.

BLEPYRUS. That won't worry him much, for has he not gained them by perjury?

PRAXAGORA. But his riches will no longer be of any use to him.

BLEPYRUS. Why?

PRAXAGORA. The poor will no longer be obliged to work; each will have all that he needs, bread, salt fish, cakes, tunics, wine, chaplets and chick-pease; of what advantage will it be to him not to contribute his share to the common wealth? What do you think of it?

BLEPYRUS. But is it not the folk who rob most that have all these things?

PRAXAGORA. Yes, formerly, under the old order of things; but now that all goods are in common, what will he gain by not bringing his wealth into the general stock?

BLEPYRUS. If someone saw a pretty wench and wished to satisfy his fancy for her, he would take some of his reserve store to make her a present and stay the night with her; this would not prevent him claiming his share of the common property.

PRAXAGORA. But he can sleep with her for nothing; I intend that women shall belong to all men in common, and each shall beget children by any man that wishes to have her.

BLEPYRUS. But all will go to the prettiest woman and beseech her to go with him.

PRAXAGORA. The ugliest and the most flat-nosed will be side by side with the most charming, and to win the latter's favours, a man will first have to get into the former.

BLEPYRUS. But we old men, shall we have penis enough if we have to satisfy the ugly first?

PRAXAGORA. They will make no resistance.

BLEPYRUS. To what?

PRAXAGORA. Never fear; they will make no resistance.

BLEPYRUS. Resistance to what?

PRAXAGORA. To the pleasure of the thing. 'Tis thus that matters will be ordered for you.

BLEPYRUS. 'Tis right well conceived for you women, for every wench's hole will be occupied; but as regards us poor men, you will leave those who are ugly to run after the handsome fellows.

PRAXAGORA. The ugly will follow the handsomest into the public places after supper and see to it that the law, which forbids the women to sleep with the big, handsome men before having satisfied the ugly shrimps, is complied with.

BLEPYRUS. Thus ugly Lysicrates' nose will be as proud as the handsomest face?

PRAXAGORA. Yes, by Apollo! this is a truly popular decree, and what a set-back 'twill be for one of those elegants with their fingers loaded with rings, when a man with heavy shoes says to him, "Give way to me and wait till I have done; you will pass in after me."

BLEPYRUS. But if we live in this fashion, how will each one know his children?

PRAXAGORA. The youngest will look upon the oldest as their fathers.

BLEPYRUS. Ah! how heartily they will strangle all the old men, since even now, when each one knows his father, they make no bones about strangling him! then, my word! won't they just scorn and shit upon the old folks!

PRAXAGORA. But those around will prevent it. Hitherto, when anyone saw an old man beaten, he would not meddle, because it did not concern him; but now each will fear the sufferer may be his own father and such violence will be stopped.

BLEPYRUS. What you say is not so silly after all; but ’twould be highly unpleasant were Epicurus and Leucolophas to come up and call me father.

PRAXAGORA. But ’twould be far worse, were …

BLEPYRUS. Were what?

PRAXAGORA. … Aristyllus to embrace you and style you his father.

BLEPYRUS. Ah! let him look to himself if he dares!

PRAXAGORA. For you would smell vilely of mint if he kissed you. But he was born before the decree was carried, so that you have not to fear his kiss.

BLEPYRUS. ’Twould be awful. But who will do the work?

PRAXAGORA. The slaves. Your only cares will be to scent yourself, and to go and dine, when the shadow of the gnomon is ten feet long on the dial.

BLEPYRUS. But how shall we obtain clothing? Tell me that!

PRAXAGORA. You will first wear out those you have, and then we women will weave you others.

BLEPYRUS. Now another point: if the magistrates condemn a citizen to the payment of a fine, how is he going to do it? Out of the public funds? That would not be right surely.

PRAXAGORA. But there will be no more lawsuits.

BLEPYRUS. What a disaster for many people!

PRAXAGORA. I have decreed it. Besides, friend, why should there be lawsuits?

BLEPYRUS. Oh! for a thousand reasons, on my faith! Firstly, because a debtor denies his obligation.

PRAXAGORA. But where will the lender get the money to lend, if all is in common? unless he steals it out of the treasury?

BLEPYRUS. That’s true, by Demeter! But then again, tell me this; here are

some men who are returning from a feast and are drunk and they strike some passer-by; how are they going to pay the fine? Ah! you are puzzled now!

PRAXAGORA. They will have to take it out of their pittance; and being thus punished through their belly, they will not care to begin again.

BLEPYRUS. There will be no more thieves then, eh?

PRAXAGORA. Why steal, if you have a share of everything?

BLEPYRUS. People will not be robbed any more at night?

PRAXAGORA. No, whether you sleep at home or in the street, there will be no more danger, for all will have the means of living. Besides, if anyone wanted to steal your cloak, you would give it him yourself. Why not? You will only have to go to the common store and be given a better one.

BLEPYRUS. There will be no more playing at dice?

PRAXAGORA. What object will there be in playing?

BLEPYRUS. But what kind of life is it you propose to set up?

PRAXAGORA. The life in common. Athens will become nothing more than a single house, in which everything will belong to everyone; so that everybody will be able to go from one house to the other at pleasure.

BLEPYRUS. And where will the meals be served?

PRAXAGORA. The law-courts and the porticoes will be turned into dining-halls.

BLEPYRUS. And what will the speaker's platform be used for?

PRAXAGORA. I shall place the bowls and the ewers there; and young children will sing the glory of the brave from there, also the infamy of cowards, who out of very shame will no longer dare to come to the public meals.

BLEPYRUS. Well thought of, by Apollo! And what will you do with the urns?

PRAXAGORA. I shall have them taken to the marketplace, and standing close

to the statue of Harmodius, I shall draw a lot for each citizen, which by its letter will show the place where he must go to dine. Thus, those for whom I have drawn a Beta, will go to the royal portico; if 'tis a Theta, they will go to the portico of Theseus; if 'tis a Kappa, to that of the flour-market.

BLEPYRUS. To cram himself there like a capon?

PRAXAGORA. No, to dine there.

BLEPYRUS. And the citizen whom the lot has not given a letter showing where he is to dine will be driven off by everyone?

PRAXAGORA. But that will not occur. Each man will have plenty; he will not leave the feast until he is well drunk, and then with a chaplet on his head and a torch in his hand; and then the women running to meet you in the cross-roads will say, "This way, come to our house, you will find a beautiful young girl there."— "And I," another will call from her balcony, "have one so pretty and as white as milk; but before touching her, you must sleep with me." And the ugly men, watching closely after the handsome fellows, will say, "Hi! friend, where are you running to? Go in, but you must do nothing, for 'tis the ugly and the flat-nosed to whom the law gives the first right of admission; amuse yourself in the porch while you wait, in handling your fig-leaves and playing with your tool." Well, tell me, does that picture suit you?

BLEPYRUS. Marvellously well.

PRAXAGORA. I must now go to the marketplace to receive the property that is going to be placed in common and to choose a woman with a loud voice as my herald. I have all the cares of State on my shoulders, since the power has been entrusted to me. I must likewise go to busy myself about establishing the common meals, and you will attend your first banquet to-day.

BLEPYRUS. Are we going to banquet?

PRAXAGORA. Why, undoubtedly! Furthermore, I propose abolishing the courtesans.

BLEPYRUS. And what for?

PRAXAGORA. 'Tis clear enough why; so that, instead of them, *we* may have

the first-fruits of the young men. It is not meet that tricked-out slaves should rob free-born women of their pleasures. Let the courtesans be free to sleep with the slaves and to depilate their privates for them.

BLEPYRUS. I will march at your side, so that I may be seen and that everyone may say, "Admire our leader's husband!" [*Exeunt Blepyrus and Praxagora.*

[The Chorus which followed this scene is lost.]

FIRST CITIZEN. Come, let us collect and examine all my belongings before taking them to the marketplace. Come hither, my beautiful sieve, I have nothing more precious than you, come, all clotted with the flour of which I have poured so many sacks through you; you shall act the part of Canephoros in the procession of my chattels. Where is the sunshade carrier? Ah! this stew-pot shall take his place. Great gods, how black it is! it could not be more so if Lysicrates had boiled the drugs in it with which he dyes his hair. Hither, my beautiful mirror. And you, my tripod, bear this urn for me; you shall be the waterbearer; and you, cock, whose morning song has so often roused me in the middle of the night to send me hurrying to the Assembly, you shall be my flute-girl. Scaphephoros, do you take the large basin, place in it the honeycombs and twine the olive-branches over them, bring the tripods and the phial of perfume; as for the humble crowd of little pots, I will just leave them behind.

SECOND CITIZEN. What folly to carry one's goods to the common store; I have a little more sense than that. No, no, by Posidon, I want first to ponder and calculate over the thing at leisure. I shall not be fool enough to strip myself of the fruits of my toil and thrift, if it is not for a very good reason; let us see first, which way things turn. Hi! friend, what means this display of goods? Are you moving or are you going to pawn your stuff?

FIRST CITIZEN. Neither.

SECOND CITIZEN. Why then are you setting all these things out in line? Is it a procession that you are starting off to the public crier, Hiero?

FIRST CITIZEN. No, but in accordance with the new law, that has been decreed, I am going to carry all these things to the marketplace to make a gift of them to the State.

SECOND CITIZEN. Oh! bah! you don't mean that.

FIRST CITIZEN. Certainly.

SECOND CITIZEN. Oh! Zeus the Deliverer! you unfortunate man!

FIRST CITIZEN. Why?

SECOND CITIZEN. Why? ’Tis as clear as noonday.

FIRST CITIZEN. Must the laws not be obeyed then?

SECOND CITIZEN. What laws, you poor fellow?

FIRST CITIZEN. Those that have been decreed.

SECOND CITIZEN. Decreed! Are you mad, I ask you?

FIRST CITIZEN. Am I mad?

SECOND CITIZEN. Oh! this is the height of folly!

FIRST CITIZEN. Because I obey the law? Is that not the first duty of an honest man?

SECOND CITIZEN. Say rather of a ninny.

FIRST CITIZEN. Don’t you propose taking what belongs to you to the common stock?

SECOND CITIZEN. I’ll take good care I don’t until I see what the majority are doing.

FIRST CITIZEN. There’s but one opinion, namely, to contribute every single thing one has.

SECOND CITIZEN. I am waiting to see it, before I believe that.

FIRST CITIZEN. At least, so they say in every street.

SECOND CITIZEN. And they will go on saying so.

FIRST CITIZEN. Everyone talks of contributing all he has.

SECOND CITIZEN. And will go on talking of it.

FIRST CITIZEN. You weary me with your doubts and dubitations.

SECOND CITIZEN. Everybody else will doubt it.

FIRST CITIZEN. The pest seize you!

SECOND CITIZEN. It *will* take you. What? give up your goods! Is there a man of sense who will do such a thing? Giving is not one of our customs. Receiving is another matter; 'tis the way of the gods themselves. Look at the position of their hands on their statues; when we ask a favour, they present their hands turned palm up so as not to give, but to receive.

FIRST CITIZEN. Wretch, let me do what is right. Come, I'll make a bundle of all these things. Where is my strap?

SECOND CITIZEN. Are you really going to carry them in?

FIRST CITIZEN. Undoubtedly, and there are my three tripods strung together already.

SECOND CITIZEN. What folly! Not to wait to see what the others do, and then …

FIRST CITIZEN. Well, and then what?

SECOND CITIZEN. … wait and put it off again.

FIRST CITIZEN. What for?

SECOND CITIZEN. That an earthquake may come or an ill-omened flash of lightning, that a weasel may run across the street and that none carry in anything more, you fool!

FIRST CITIZEN. 'Twould be a fine matter, were I to find no room left for placing all this.

SECOND CITIZEN. You are much more likely to lose your stuff. As for placing it, you can be at ease, for there will be room enough as long as a month hence.

FIRST CITIZEN. Why?

SECOND CITIZEN. I know these folk; a decree is soon passed, but it is not so easily attended to.

FIRST CITIZEN. All will contribute their property, my friend.

SECOND CITIZEN. But what if they don't?

FIRST CITIZEN. But there is no doubt that they will.

SECOND CITIZEN. But *anyhow*, what if they don't?

FIRST CITIZEN. We shall compel them to do so.

SECOND CITIZEN. And what if they prove the stronger?

FIRST CITIZEN. I shall leave my goods and go off.

SECOND CITIZEN. And what if they sell them for you?

FIRST CITIZEN. The plague take you!

SECOND CITIZEN. And if it does?

FIRST CITIZEN. 'Twill be a good riddance.

SECOND CITIZEN. You are bent on contributing then?

FIRST CITIZEN. 'Pon my soul, yes! Look, there are all my neighbours carrying in all they have.

SECOND CITIZEN. Ha, ha! 'Tis no doubt Antisthenes. He's a fellow who would rather sit on his pot for thirty days than not!

FIRST CITIZEN. The pest seize you!

SECOND CITIZEN. And perhaps Callimachus is going to take in more money than Callias owns? That man want to ruin himself!

FIRST CITIZEN. How you weary me!

SECOND CITIZEN. Ah! I weary you! But, wretch, see what comes of decrees of this kind. Don't you remember the one reducing the price of salt, eh?

FIRST CITIZEN. Why, certainly I do.

SECOND CITIZEN. And do you remember that about the copper coinage?

FIRST CITIZEN. Ah! that cursed money did me enough harm. I had sold my grapes and had my mouth stuffed with pieces of copper; indeed I was going to the market to buy flour, and was in the act of holding out my bag wide open, when the herald started shouting, "Let none in future accept pieces of copper; those of silver are alone current."

SECOND CITIZEN. And quite lately, were we not all swearing that the impost of one-fortieth, which Euripides had conceived, would bring five talents to the State, and everyone was vaunting Euripides to the skies? But when the thing was looked at closely, it was seen that this fine decree was mere moonshine and would produce nothing, and you would have willingly burnt this very same Euripides alive.

FIRST CITIZEN. The cases are quite different, my good fellow. We were the rulers then, but now 'tis the women.

SECOND CITIZEN. Whom, by Posidon, I will never allow to piss on my nose.

FIRST CITIZEN. I don't know what the devil you're chattering about.
Slave, pick up that bundle.

HERALD. Let all citizens come, let them hasten at our leader's bidding! 'Tis the new law. The lot will teach each citizen where he is to dine; the tables are already laid and loaded with the most exquisite dishes; the couches are covered with the softest of cushions; the wine and water is already being mixed in the ewers; the slaves are standing in a row and waiting to pour scent over the guests; the fish is being grilled, the hares are on the spit and the cakes are being kneaded, chaplets are being plaited and the fritters are frying; the youngest women are watching the pea-soup in the saucepans, and in the midst of them all stands Smaeus, dressed as a knight, washing the crockery. And Geres has come, dressed in a grand tunic and finely shod; he is joking with another young fellow and has already divested himself of his heavy shoes and his cloak. The pantryman is waiting, so come and use your jaws.

SECOND CITIZEN. Aye, I'll go. Why should I delay, since the Republic commands me?

FIRST CITIZEN. And where are you going to, since you have not deposited your belongings?

SECOND CITIZEN. To the feast.

FIRST CITIZEN. If the women have any wits, they will first insist on your depositing your goods.

SECOND CITIZEN. But I am going to deposit them.

FIRST CITIZEN. When?

SECOND CITIZEN. I am not the man to make delays.

FIRST CITIZEN. How do you mean?

SECOND CITIZEN. There will be many less eager than I.

FIRST CITIZEN. In the meantime you are going to dine.

SECOND CITIZEN. What else should I do? Every sensible man must give his help to the State.

FIRST CITIZEN. But if admission is forbidden you?

SECOND CITIZEN. I shall duck my head and slip in.

FIRST CITIZEN. And if the women have you beaten?

SECOND CITIZEN. I shall summon them.

FIRST CITIZEN. And if they laugh you in the face?

SECOND CITIZEN. I shall stand near the door …

FIRST CITIZEN. And then?

SECOND CITIZEN. … and seize upon the dishes as they pass.

FIRST CITIZEN. Then go there, but after me. Sicon and Parmeno, pick up all the baggage.

SECOND CITIZEN. Come, I will help you carry it.

FIRST CITIZEN. No, no, I should be afraid of your pretending to the leader that what I am depositing belonged to you.

SECOND CITIZEN. Let me see! let me think of some good trick by which I can keep my goods and yet take my share of the common feast. Ha! that's a good notion! Quick! I'll go and dine, ha, ha! [*Exit laughing*.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. How is this? no men are coming? And yet it must be fully time! 'Tis then for naught that I have painted myself with white lead, dressed myself in my beautiful yellow robe, and that I am here, frolicking and humming between my teeth to attract some passer-by! Oh, Muses, alight upon my lips, inspire me with some soft Ionian love-song!

A YOUNG GIRL. You rotten old thing, you have placed yourself at the window before me. You were expecting to strip my vines during my absence and to trap some man in your snares with your songs. If you sing, I shall follow suit; all this singing will weary the spectators, but is nevertheless very pleasant and very diverting.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Ha! here is an old man; take him and lead him away. As for you, you young flute-player, let us hear some airs that are worthy of you and me. Let him who wishes to taste pleasure come to my side. These young things know nothing about it; 'tis only the women of ripe age who understand the art of love, and no one could know how to fondle the lover who possessed me so well as myself; the young girls are all flightiness.

YOUNG GIRL. Don't be jealous of the young girls; voluptuousness resides in the pure outline of their beautiful limbs and blossoms on their rounded bosoms; but you, old woman, you who are tricked out and perfumed as if for your own funeral, are an object of love only for grim Death himself.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. May your hole be stopped; may you be unable to find your couch when you want to be fucked. And on your couch, when your lips seek a lover, may you embrace only a viper!

YOUNG GIRL. Alas! alas! what is to become of me? There is no lover! I am left here alone; my mother has gone out and the rest care little for me. Oh! my dear nurse, I adjure you to call Orthagoras, and may heaven bless you.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Ah! poor child, desire is consuming you like an Ionian woman; I think you are no stranger to the wanton arts of the Lesbian women, but you shall not rob me of my pleasures; you will not be able to reduce or filch the time that first belongs to me, for your own gain. Sing as much as you please, peep out like a cat lying in wait, but none shall pass through your door without first having been to see me.

YOUNG GIRL. If anyone enter your house, ‘twill be to carry out your corpse.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. That’s new to me.

YOUNG GIRL. What! you rotten wretch, can anything be new to an old hag like you?

FIRST OLD WOMAN. My old age will not harm you.

YOUNG GIRL. Ah! shame on your painted cheeks!

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Why do you speak to me at all?

YOUNG GIRL. And why do you place yourself at the window?

FIRST OLD WOMAN. I am singing to myself about my lover, Epigenes.

YOUNG GIRL. Can you have any other lover than that old fop Geres?

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Epigenes will show you that himself, for he is coming to me. See, here he is.

YOUNG GIRL. He’s not thinking of you in the least, you old witch.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Aye, but he is, you little pest.

YOUNG GIRL. Let’s see what he will do. I will leave my window.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. And I likewise. You will see I am not far wrong.

A YOUNG MAN. Ah! could I but sleep with the young girl without first satisfying the old flat-nose! ’Tis intolerable for a free-born man.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Willy nilly, you must first gratify my desire. There shall be no nonsense about that, for my authority is the law and the law must be obeyed in a democracy. But come, let me hide, to see what he’s going to do.

YOUNG MAN. Ah! ye gods, if I were to find the sweet child alone! for the wine has fired my lust.

YOUNG GIRL. I have tricked that cursed old wretch; she has left her window, thinking I would stay at home.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Ah! here is the lover we were talking of. This way, my love, this way, come here and haste to rest the whole night in my arms. I worship your lovely curly hair; I am consumed with ardent desire. Oh! Eros, in thy mercy, compel him to my bed.

YOUNG MAN *(standing beneath the young girl’s window and singing)*. Come down and haste to open the door unless you want to see me fall dead with desire. Dearest treasure, I am burning to yield myself to most voluptuous sport, lying on your bosom, to let my hands play with your buttocks. Aphrodité, why dost thou fire me with such delight in her? Oh! Eros, I beseech thee, have mercy and make her share my couch. Words cannot express the tortures I am suffering. Oh! my adored one, I adjure you, open your door for me and press me to your heart; ’tis for you that I am suffering. Oh! my jewel, my idol, you child of Aphrodité, the confidante of the Muses, the sister of the Graces, you living picture of Voluptuousness, oh! open for me, press me to your heart, ’tis for you that I am suffering.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Are you knocking? Is it I you seek?

YOUNG MAN. What an idea!

FIRST OLD WOMAN. But you were tapping at the door.

YOUNG MAN. Death would be sweeter.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Why do you come with that torch in your hand?

YOUNG MAN. I am looking for a man from Anaphlystia.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. What's his name?

YOUNG MAN. Oh! 'tis not Sebinus, whom no doubt you are expecting.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. By Aphrodité, you *must*, whether you like it or not.

YOUNG MAN. We are not now concerned with cases dated sixty years back; they are remanded for a later day; we are dealing only with those of less than twenty.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. That was under the old order of things, sweetheart, but now you must first busy yourself with us.

YOUNG MAN. Aye, *if I want to*, according to the rules of draughts, where we may either take or leave.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. But 'tis not according to the rules of draughts that you take your seat at the banquet.

YOUNG MAN. I don't know what you mean; 'tis at this door I want to knock.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Not before knocking at mine first.

YOUNG MAN. For the moment I really have no need for old leather.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. I know that you love me; perhaps you are surprised to find me at the door. But come, let me kiss you.

YOUNG MAN. No, no, my dear, I am afraid of your lover.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Of whom?

YOUNG MAN. The most gifted of painters.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Why, whom do you mean to speak of?

YOUNG MAN. The artist who paints the little bottles on coffins. But get you indoors, lest he should find you at the door.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. I know what you want.

YOUNG MAN. I can say as much of you.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. By Aphrodité, who has granted me this good chance, I won't let you go.

YOUNG MAN. You are drivelling, you little old hag.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Rubbish! I am going to lead you to my couch.

YOUNG MAN. What need for buying hooks? I will let her down to the bottom of the well and pull up the buckets with her old carcase, for she's crooked enough for that.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. A truce to your jeering, poor boy, and follow me.

YOUNG MAN. Nothing compels me to do so, unless you have paid the levy of five hundredths for me.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Look, by Aphrodité, there is nothing that delights me as much as sleeping with a lad of your years.

YOUNG MAN. And I abhor such as you, and I will never, never consent.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. But, by Zeus, here is something will force you to it.

YOUNG MAN. What's that?

FIRST OLD WOMAN. A decree, which orders you to enter my house.

YOUNG MAN. Read it out then, and let's hear.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Listen. "The women have decreed, that if a young man desires a young girl, he can only possess her after having satisfied an old woman; and if he refuses and goes to seek the maiden, the old women are authorized to seize him by his privates and so drag him in."

YOUNG MAN. Alas! I shall become a Procrustes.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Obey the law.

YOUNG MAN. But if a fellow-citizen, a friend, came to pay my ransom?

FIRST OLD WOMAN. No man may dispose of anything above a medimnus.

YOUNG MAN. But may I not enter an excuse?

FIRST OLD WOMAN. There's no evasion.

YOUNG MAN. I shall declare myself a merchant and so escape service.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Beware what you do!

YOUNG MAN. Well! what is to be done?

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Follow me.

YOUNG MAN. Is it absolutely necessary?

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Yes, as surely as if Diomedes had commanded it.

YOUNG MAN. Well then, first spread out a layer of origanum upon four pieces of wood; bind fillets round your head, bring phials of scent and place a bowl filled with lustral water before your door.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Will you buy a chaplet for me too?

YOUNG MAN. Aye, if you outlast the tapers; for I expect to see you fall down dead as you go in.

YOUNG GIRL. Where are you dragging this unfortunate man to?

FIRST OLD WOMAN. 'Tis my very own property that I am leading in.

YOUNG GIRL. You do ill. A young fellow like him is not of the age to suit you. You ought to be his mother rather than his wife. With these laws in force, the earth will be filled with Oedipuses.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Oh! you cursed pest! 'tis envy that makes you say this; but I will be revenged.

YOUNG MAN. By Zeus the Deliverer, what a service you have done me, by

freeing me of this old wretch! with what ardour I will show you my gratitude in a form both long and thick!

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Hi! you there! where are you taking that young man to, in spite of the law? The decree ordains that he must first sleep with me.

YOUNG MAN. Oh! what a misfortune! Where does *this* hag come from? 'Tis a more frightful monster than the other even.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Come here.

YOUNG MAN *(to the young girl)*. Oh! I adjure you, don't let me be led off by her!

SECOND OLD WOMAN. 'Tis not I; 'tis the law that leads you off.

YOUNG MAN. No, 'tis not the law, but an Empusa with a body covered with blemishes and blotches.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Follow me, my handsome little friend, come along quick without any more ado.

YOUNG MAN. Oh! let me first do the needful, so that I may gather my wits somewhat. Else I should be so terrified that you would see me letting out something yellow.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Never mind! you can stool, if you want, in my house.

YOUNG MAN. Oh! I fear doing more than I want to; but I offer you two good securities.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. I don't require them.

THIRD OLD WOMAN. Hi! friend, where are you off to with that woman?

YOUNG MAN. I am not going with her, but am being dragged by force. Oh! whoever you are, may heaven bless you for having had pity on me in my dire misfortune. *(Turns round and sees the Third Old Woman.)* Oh Heracles! oh Heracles! oh Pan! Oh ye Corybantes! oh ye Dioscuri! Why, she is still more awful! Oh! what a monster! great gods! Are you an ape plastered with white

lead, or the ghost of some old hag returned from the dark borderlands of death?

THIRD OLD WOMAN. No jesting! Follow me.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. No, come this way.

THIRD OLD WOMAN. I will never let you go.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Nor will I.

YOUNG MAN. But you will rend me asunder, you cursed wretches.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. 'Tis I he must go with according to the law.

THIRD OLD WOMAN. Not if an uglier old woman than yourself appears.

YOUNG MAN. But if you kill me at the outset, how shall I afterwards go to find this beautiful girl of mine?

THIRD OLD WOMAN. That's your business. But begin by obeying.

YOUNG MAN. Of which one must I rid myself first?

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Don't you know? Come here.

YOUNG MAN. Then let the other one release me.

THIRD OLD WOMAN. Come to my house.

YOUNG MAN. If this dame will let me go.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. No, by all the gods, I'll not let you go.

THIRD OLD WOMAN. Nor will I.

YOUNG MAN. You would make very bad boatwomen.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Why?

YOUNG MAN. Because you would tear your passengers to pieces in dragging them on board.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Then come along, do, and hold your tongue.

THIRD OLD WOMAN. No, by Zeus, come with me.

YOUNG MAN. 'Tis clearly a case of the decree of Cannonus; I must cut myself in two in order to fuck you both. But how am I to work two oars at once?

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Easily enough; you have only to eat a full pot of onions.

YOUNG MAN. Oh! great gods! here I am close to the door and being dragged in!

THIRD OLD WOMAN *(to Second Old Woman)*. You will gain nothing by this, for I shall rush into your house with you.

YOUNG MAN. Oh, no! no! 'twould be better to suffer a single misfortune than two.

THIRD OLD WOMAN. Ah! by Hecaté, 'twill be all the same whether you wish it or not.

YOUNG MAN. What a fate is mine, that I must gratify such a stinking harridan the whole night through and all day; then, when I am rid of her, I have still to tackle a hag of brick-colour hue! Am I not truly unfortunate? Ah! by Zeus the Deliverer! under what fatal star must I have been born, that I must sail in company with such monsters! But if my bark sinks in the sewer of these strumpets, may I be buried at the very threshold of the door; let this hag be stood upright on my grave, let her be coated alive with pitch and her legs covered with molten lead up to the ankles, and let her be set alight as a funeral lamp.

A SERVANT-MAID TO PRAXAGORA *(she comes from the banquet)*. What happiness is the people's! what joy is mine, and above all that of my mistress! Happy are ye, who form choruses before our house! Happy all ye, both neighbours and fellow-citizens! Happy am I myself! I am but a servant, and yet I have poured on my hair the most exquisite essences. Let thanks be rendered to thee, oh, Zeus! But a still more delicious aroma is that of the wine of Thasos; its sweet bouquet delights the drinker for a long enough, whereas the others lose their bloom and vanish quickly. Therefore, long life to the wine-jars of Thasos! Pour yourselves out unmixed wine, it will cheer you the whole night through, if

you choose the liquor that possesses most fragrance. But tell me, friends, where is my mistress's husband?

CHORUS. Wait for him here; he will no doubt pass this way.

MAID-SERVANT. Ah! there he is just going to dinner. Oh! master! what joy! what blessedness is yours!

BLEPYRUS. Ah! d'you think so?

MAID-SERVANT. None can compare his happiness to yours; you have reached its utmost height, you who, alone out of thirty thousand citizens, have not yet dined.

CHORUS Aye, here is undoubtedly a truly happy man.

MAID-SERVANT. Where are you off to?

BLEPYRUS. I am going to dine.

MAID-SERVANT. By Aphrodité, you will be the last of all, far and away the last. Yet my mistress has bidden me take you and take with you these young girls. Some Chian wine is left and lots of other good things. Therefore hurry, and invite likewise all the spectators whom we have pleased, and such of the judges as are not against us, to follow us; we will offer them everything they can desire. Let our hospitality be large and generous; forget no one, neither old nor young men, nor children. Dinner is ready for them all; they have but to go … home.

CHORUS. I am betaking myself to the banquet with this torch in my hand according to custom. But why do you tarry, Blepyrus? Take these young girls with you and, while you are away a while, I will whet my appetite with some dining-song. I have but a few words to say: let the wise judge me because of whatever is wise in this piece, and those who like a laugh by whatever has made them laugh. In this way I address pretty well everyone. If the lot has assigned my comedy to be played first of all, don't let that be a disadvantage to me; engrave in your memory all that shall have pleased you in it and judge the competitors equitably as you have bound yourselves by oath to do. Don't act like vile courtesans, who never remember any but their last lover. It is time, friends, high time to go to the banquet, if we want to have our share of it. Open your ranks and let the Cretan rhythms regulate your dances.

SEMI-CHORUS. Ready; we are ready!

CHORUS. And you others, let your light steps too keep time. Very soon will be served a very fine menu*[*]* — oysters-saltfish-skate-sharks'-heads left-over-vinegar-dressing-laserpitium-leek-with-honey-sauce-thrush blackbird-pigeon-dove-roast-cock's-brains-wagtail-cushat-hare-stewed in-new-wine-gristle-of-veal-pullet's-wings. Come, quick, seize hold of a plate, snatch up a cup, and let's run to secure a place at table. The rest will have their jaws at work by this time.

[Transcriber's note: In the original, all following words until 'wings' are connected with hyphens, i.e. they form one word.]*

SEMI-CHORUS. Let up leap and dance, Io! evoë! Let us to dinner, Io! evoë.
For victory is ours, victory is ours! Ho! Victory! Io! evoë!

WEALTH

Anonymous translation for the Athenian Society, London, 1912

First produced in 408 BC, this political satire features the personified god of wealth Plutus and is unique among Aristophanes' extant works for demonstrating the development of Old Comedy towards New Comedy. Unlike the burlesque and bawdy early political plays, *Wealth* uses such familiar character types such as the stupid master and the cunning and insubordinate slave, which are often seen in the New Comedy works of later playwrights such as Menander.

Wealth introduces the elderly Athenian citizen, Chremylos, who presents himself and his family as virtuous but poor, and has accordingly gone to seek advice from an oracle. The play begins as he returns to Athens from Delphi, having been instructed by Apollo to follow the first man he meets and persuade him to come home with him. That man turns out to be the god of wealth Plutus, who is a blind beggar. After much argument, Plutus is convinced to enter Chremylus' house, where he will have his vision restored, meaning that "wealth" will now go only to those who deserve it in one way or another. The first part of the play examines the concept that wealth is not distributed to the virtuous, or necessarily to the non-virtuous, but instead it is distributed randomly. Chremylos is convinced that if Plutus' eyesight can be restored, these wrongs can be righted, making the world a better place.

The second part of the drama introduces the goddess Poverty, who counters Chremylos' arguments that it is better to be rich, by arguing that without poverty there would be no slaves, as every slave would buy his freedom, and no fine goods or luxury foods, as nobody would work if everyone were rich – once again posing engaging questions for the audience to consider. After Plutus' eyesight is restored at the Temple of Asclepius, he formally becomes a member of Chremylus' household. At the same time, the entire world is turned upside-down economically and socially. Unsurprisingly, this gives rise to rancorous comments and claims of unfairness from those who have been deprived of their riches.

Eirene (Peace) bearing Plutus (Wealth), Roman copy after a Greek votive statue by Kephisodotos, c. 370 BC

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INTRODUCTION

The ‘Plutus’ differs widely from all other works of its Author, and, it must be confessed, is the least interesting and diverting of them all. “In its absence of personal interests and personal satire,” and its lack of strong comic incidents, “it approximates rather to a whimsical allegory than a comedy properly so called.”

The plot is of the simplest. Chremylus, a poor but just man, accompanied by his body-servant Cario — the redeeming feature, by the by, of an otherwise dull play, the original type of the comic valet of the stage of all subsequent periods — consults the Delphic Oracle concerning his son, whether he ought not to be instructed in injustice and knavery and the other arts whereby worldly men acquire riches. By way of answer the god only tells him that he is to follow whomsoever he first meets upon leaving the temple, who proves to be a blind and ragged old man. But this turns out to be no other than Plutus himself, the god of riches, whom Zeus has robbed of his eyesight, so that he may be unable henceforth to distinguish between the just and the unjust. However, succoured by Chremylus and conducted by him to the Temple of Aesculapius, Plutus regains the use of his eyes. Whereupon all just men, including the god’s benefactor, are made rich and prosperous, and the unjust reduced to indigence.

The play was, it seems, twice put upon the stage — first in 408 B.C., and again in a revised and reinforced edition, with allusions and innuendoes brought up to date, in 388 B.C., a few years before the Author’s death. The text we possess — marred, however, by several considerable lacunae — is now generally allowed to be that of the piece as played at the later date, when it won the prize.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CHREMYLUS.
CARIO, Servant of Chremylus.
PLUTUS, God of Riches.
BLEPSIDEMUS, friend of Chremylus.
WIFE OF CHREMYLUS.
POVERTY.
A JUST MAN.
AN INFORMER, or Sycophant.
AN OLD WOMAN.
A YOUTH.
HERMES.
A PRIEST OF ZEUS.
CHORUS OF RUSTICS.

SCENE: In front of a farmhouse — a road leading up to it.

PLUTUS

CARIO. What an unhappy fate, great gods, to be the slave of a fool! A servant may give the best of advice, but if his master does not follow it, the poor slave must inevitably have his share in the disaster; for fortune does not allow him to dispose of his own body, it belongs to his master who has bought it. Alas! 'tis the way of the world. But the god, Apollo, whose oracles the Pythian priestess on her golden tripod makes known to us, deserves my censure, for 'tis assured he is a physician and a cunning diviner; and yet my master is leaving his temple infected with mere madness and insists on following a blind man. Is this not opposed to all good sense? 'Tis for us, who see clearly, to guide those who don't; whereas he clings to the trail of a blind fellow and compels me to do the same without answering my questions with ever a word. *(To Chremylus.)* Aye, master, unless you tell me why we are following this unknown fellow, I will not be silent, but I will worry and torment you, for you cannot beat me because of my sacred chaplet of laurel.

CHREMYLUS. No, but if you worry me I will take off your chaplet, and then you will only get a sounder thrashing.

CARIO. That's an old song! I am going to leave you no peace till you have told me who this man is; and if I ask it, 'tis entirely because of my interest in you.

CHREMYLUS. Well, be it so. I will reveal it to you as being the most faithful and the most rascally of all my servants. I honoured the gods and did what was right, and yet I was none the less poor and unfortunate.

CARIO. I know it but too well.

CHREMYLUS. Other amassed wealth — the sacrilegious, the demagogues, the informers, indeed every sort of rascal.

CARIO. I believe you.

CHREMYLUS. Therefore I came to consult the oracle of the god, not on my own account, for my unfortunate life is nearing its end, but for my only son; I wanted to ask Apollo, if it was necessary for him to become a thorough knave and renounce his virtuous principles, since that seemed to me to be the only way

to succeed in life.

CARIO. And with what responding tones did the sacred tripod resound?

CHREMYLUS. You shall know. The god ordered me in plain terms to follow the first man I should meet upon leaving the temple and to persuade him to accompany me home.

CARIO. And who was the first one you met?

CHREMYLUS. This blind man.

CARIO. And you are stupid enough not to understand the meaning of such an answer? Why, the god was advising you thereby, and that in the clearest possible way, to bring up your son according to the fashion of your country.

CHREMYLUS. What makes you think that?

CARIO. Is it not evident to the blind, that nowadays to do nothing that is right is the best way to get on?

CHREMYLUS. No, that is not the meaning of the oracle; there must be another, that is nobler. If this blind man would tell us who he is and why and with what object he has led us here, we should no doubt understand what our oracle really does mean.

CARIO *(to Plutus)*. Come, tell us at once who you are, or I give effect to my threat. *(He menaces him.)* And quick too, be quick, I say.

PLUTUS. I'll thrash you.

CARIO *(to Chremylus)*. Ha! is it thus he tells us his name?

CHREMYLUS. 'Tis to you and not to me that he replies thus; your mode of questioning him was ill-advised. *(To Plutus.)* Come, friend, if you care to oblige an honest man, answer me.

PLUTUS. I'll knock you down.

CARIO. Ah! what a pleasant fellow and what a delightful prophecy the god has

given you!

CHREMYLUS. By Demeter, you'll have no reason to laugh presently.

CARIO. If you don't speak, you wretch, I will surely do you an ill turn.

PLUTUS. Friends, take yourselves off and leave me.

CHREMYLUS. That we very certainly shan't.

CARIO. This, master, is the best thing to do. I'll undertake to secure him the most frightful death; I will lead him to the verge of a precipice and then leave him there, so that he'll break his neck when he pitches over.

CHREMYLUS. Well then, I leave him to you, and do the thing quickly.

PLUTUS. Oh, no! Have mercy!

CHREMYLUS. Will you speak then?

PLUTUS. But if you learn who I am, I know well that you will ill-use me and will not let me go again.

CHREMYLUS. I call the gods to witness that you have naught to fear if you will only speak.

PLUTUS. Well then, first unhand me.

CHREMYLUS. There! we set you free.

PLUTUS. Listen then, since I must reveal what I had intended to keep a secret. I am Plutus.

CHREMYLUS. Oh! you wretched rascal! You Plutus all the while, and you never said so!

CARIO. You, Plutus, and in this piteous guise!

CHREMYLUS. Oh, Phoebus Apollo! oh, ye gods of heaven and hell! Oh, Zeus! is it really and truly as you say?

PLUTUS. Aye.

CHREMYLUS. Plutus' very own self?

PLUTUS. His own very self and none other.

CHREMYLUS. But tell me, whence come you to be so squalid?

PLUTUS. I have just left Patrocles' house, who has not had a bath since his birth.

CHREMYLUS. But your infirmity; how did that happen? Tell me.

PLUTUS. Zeus inflicted it on me, because of his jealousy of mankind. When I was young, I threatened him that I would only go to the just, the wise, the men of ordered life; to prevent my distinguishing these, he struck me with blindness! so much does he envy the good!

CHREMYLUS. And yet, 'tis only the upright and just who honour him.

PLUTUS. Quite true.

CHREMYLUS. Therefore, if ever you recovered your sight, you would shun the wicked?

PLUTUS. Undoubtedly.

CHREMYLUS. You would visit the good?

PLUTUS. Assuredly. It is a very long time since I saw them.

CHREMYLUS. That's not astonishing. I, who see clearly, don't see a single one.

PLUTUS. Now let me leave you, for I have told you everything.

CHREMYLUS. No, certainly not! we shall fasten ourselves on to you faster than ever.

PLUTUS. Did I not tell you, you were going to plague me?

CHREMYLUS. Oh! I adjure you, believe what I say and don't leave me; for you will seek in vain for a more honest man than myself.

CARIO. There is only one man more worthy; and that is I.

PLUTUS. All talk like this, but as soon as they secure my favours and grow rich, their wickedness knows no bounds.

CHREMYLUS. And yet all men are not wicked.

PLUTUS. All. There's no exception.

CARIO. You shall pay for that opinion.

CHREMYLUS. Listen to what happiness there is in store for you, if you but stay with us. I have hope; aye, I have good hope with the god's help to deliver you from that blindness, in fact to restore your sight.

PLUTUS. Oh! do nothing of the kind, for I don't wish to recover it.

CHREMYLUS. What's that you say?

CARIO. This fellow hugs his own misery.

PLUTUS. If you were mad enough to cure me, and Zeus heard of it, he would overwhelm me with his anger.

CHREMYLUS. And is he not doing this now by leaving you to grope your wandering way?

PLUTUS. I don't know; but I'm horribly afraid of him.

CHREMYLUS. Indeed? Ah! you are the biggest poltroon of all the gods! Why, Zeus with his throne and his lightnings would not be worth an obolus if you recovered your sight, were it but for a few instants.

PLUTUS. Impious man, don't talk like that.

CHREMYLUS. Fear nothing! I will prove to you that you are far more powerful and mightier than he.

PLUTUS. I mightier than he?

CHREMYLUS. Aye, by heaven! For instance, what is the origin of the power that Zeus wields over the other gods?

CARIO. ’Tis money; he has so much of it.

CHREMYLUS. And who gives it to him?

CARIO *(pointing to Plutus)*. This fellow.

CHREMYLUS. If sacrifices are offered to him, is not Plutus their cause?

CARIO. Undoubtedly, for ’tis wealth that all demand and clamour most loudly for.

CHREMYLUS. Thus ’tis Plutus who is the fount of all the honours rendered to Zeus, whose worship he can wither up at the root, if it so please him.

PLUTUS. And how so?

CHREMYLUS. Not an ox, nor a cake, nor indeed anything at all could be offered, if you did not wish it.

PLUTUS. Why?

CHREMYLUS. Why? but what means are there to buy anything if you are not there to give the money? Hence if Zeus should cause you any trouble, you will destroy his power without other help.

PLUTUS. So ’tis because of me that sacrifices are offered to him?

CHREMYLUS. Most assuredly. Whatever is dazzling, beautiful or charming in the eyes of mankind, comes from you. Does not everything depend on wealth?

CARIO. I myself was bought for a few coins; if I’m a slave, ’tis only because I was not rich.

CHREMYLUS. And what of the Corinthian courtesans? If a poor man offers them proposals, they do not listen; but if it be a rich one, instantly they offer their buttocks for his pleasure.

CARIO. ’Tis the same with the lads; they care not for love, to them money means everything.

CHREMYLUS. You speak of those who accept all comers; yet some of them are honest, and ’tis not money they ask of their patrons.

CARIO. What then?

CHREMYLUS. A fine horse, a pack of hounds.

CARIO. Aye, they would blush to ask for money and cleverly disguise their shame.

CHREMYLUS. ’Tis in you that every art, all human inventions, have had their origin; ’tis through you that one man sits cutting leather in his shop.

CARIO. That another fashions iron or wood.

CHREMYLUS. That yet another chases the gold he has received from you.

CARIO. That one is a fuller.

CHREMYLUS. That t’other washes wool.

CARIO. That this one is a tanner.

CHREMYLUS. And that other sells onions.

CARIO. And if the adulterer, caught red-handed, is depilated, ’tis on account of you.

PLUTUS. Oh! great gods! I knew naught of all this!

CARIO. Is it not he who lends the Great King all his pride?

CHREMYLUS. Is it not he who draws the citizens to the Assembly?

CARIO. And tell me, is it not you who equip the triremes?

CHREMYLUS. And who feed our mercenaries at Corinth?

CARIO. Are not you the cause of Pamphilus' sufferings?

CHREMYLUS. And of the needle-seller's with Pamphilus?

CARIO. Is it not because of you that Agyrrhius lets wind so loudly?

CHREMYLUS. And that Philepsius rolls off his fables?

CARIO. That troops are sent to succour the Egyptians?

CHREMYLUS. And that Laïs is kept by Philonides?

CARIO. That the tower of Timotheus …

CHREMYLUS. … *(To Cario.)* May it fall upon your head! *(To Plutus.)* In short, Plutus, 'tis through you that everything is done; be it known to you that you are the sole cause both of good and evil.

CARIO. In war, 'tis the flag under which you serve that victory favours.

PLUTUS. What! I can do so many things by myself and unaided?

CHREMYLUS. And many others besides; wherefore men are never tired of your gifts. They get weary of all else, — of love …

CARIO. Of bread.

CHREMYLUS. Of music.

CARIO. Of sweetmeats.

CHREMYLUS. Of honours.

CARIO. Of cakes.

CHREMYLUS. Of battles.

CARIO. Of figs.

CHREMYLUS. Of ambition.

CARIO. Of gruel.

CHREMYLUS. Of military advancement.

CARIO. Of lentils.

CHREMYLUS. But of you they never tire. Has a man got thirteen talents, he has all the greater ardour to possess sixteen; is that wish achieved, he will want forty or will complain that he knows not how to make the two ends meet.

PLUTUS. All this, methinks, is very true; there is but one point that makes me feel a bit uneasy.

CHREMYLUS. And that is?

PLUTUS. How could I use this power, which you say I have?

CHREMYLUS. Ah! they were quite right who said, there's nothing more timorous than Plutus.

PLUTUS. No, no; it was a thief who calumniated me. Having broken into a house, he found everything locked up and could take nothing, so he dubbed my prudence fear.

CHREMYLUS. Don't be disturbed; if you support me zealously, I'll make you more sharp-sighted than Lynceus.

PLUTUS. And how should you be able to do that, you, who are but a mortal?

CHREMYLUS. I have great hope, after the answer Apollo gave me, shaking his sacred laurels the while.

PLUTUS. Is *he* in the plot then?

CHREMYLUS. Aye, truly.

PLUTUS. Take care what you say.

CHREMYLUS. Never fear, friend; for, be well assured, that if it has to cost me my life, I will carry out what I have in my head.

CARIO. And I will help you, if you permit it.

CHREMYLUS. We shall have many other helpers as well — all the worthy folk who are wanting for bread.

PLUTUS. Ah! ha! they'll prove sorry helpers.

CHREMYLUS. No, not so, once they've grown rich. But you, Cario, run quick …

CARIO. Where?

CHREMYLUS. … to call my comrades, the other husbandmen, that each of them may come here to take his share of the gifts of Plutus.

CARIO. I'm off. But let someone come from the house to take this morsel of meat.

CHREMYLUS. I'll see to that; you run your hardest. As for you, Plutus, the most excellent of all the gods, come in here with me; this is the house you must fill with riches today, by fair means or foul.

PLUTUS. I don't like at all going into other folks' houses in this manner; I have never got any good from it. If I got inside a miser's house, straightway he would bury me deep underground; if some honest fellow among his friends came to ask him for the smallest coin, he would deny ever having seen me. Then if I went to a fool's house, he would sacrifice me as a prey to gaming and to girls, and very soon I should be completely stripped and pitched out of doors.

CHREMYLUS. That's because you have never met a man who knew how to avoid the two extremes; moderation is the strong point in my character. I love saving as much as anybody, and I know how to spend, when 'tis needed. But let us go in; I want to make you known to my wife and to my only son, whom I love most of all after yourself.

PLUTUS. Aye, after myself, I'm very sure of that.

CHREMYLUS. Why should I hide the truth from you?

CARIO. Come, you active workers, who, like my master, eat nothing but garlic

and the poorest food, you who are his friends and his neighbours, hasten your steps, hurry yourselves; there's not a moment to lose; this is the critical hour, when your presence and your support is needed by him.

CHORUS. Why, don't you see we are speeding as fast as men can, who are already enfeebled by age? But do you deem it fitting to make us run like this before ever telling us why your master has called us?

CARIO. I've grown hoarse with the telling, but you won't listen. My master is going to drag you all out of the stupid, sapless life you are leading and ensure you one full of all delights.

CHORUS. And how is he going to manage that?

CARIO. My poor friends, he has brought with him a disgusting old fellow, all bent and wrinkled, with a most pitiful appearance, bald and toothless; upon my word, I even believe he is circumcised like some vile barbarian.

CHORUS. These are news worth their weight in gold! What are you saying? Repeat it to me; no doubt it means he is bringing back a heap of wealth.

CARIO. No, but a heap of all the infirmities attendant on old age.

CHORUS. If you are tricking us, you shall pay us for it. Beware of our sticks!

CARIO. Do you deem me so brazen as all that, and my words mere lies?

CHORUS. What serious airs the rascal puts on! Look! his legs are already shrieking, "oh! oh!" they are asking for the shackles and wedges.

CARIO. 'Tis in the tomb that 'tis your lot to judge. Why don't you go there? Charon has given you your ticket.

CHORUS. Plague take you! you cursed rascal, who rail at us and have not even the heart to tell us why your master has made us come. We were pressed for time and tired out, yet we came with all haste, and in our hurry we have passed by lots of wild onions without even gathering them.

CARIO. I will no longer conceal the truth from you. Friends, 'tis Plutus whom my master brings, Plutus, who will give you riches.

CHORUS. What! we shall really all become rich!

CARIO. Aye, certainly; you will then be Midases, provided you grow ass's ears.

CHORUS. What joy, what happiness! If what you tell me is true, I long to dance with delight.

CARIO. And I too, threttanello! I want to imitate Cyclops and lead your troop by stamping like this. Do you, my dear little ones, cry, aye, cry again and bleat forth the plaintive song of the sheep and of the stinking goats; follow me with erected organs like lascivious goats ready for action.

CHORUS. As for us, threttanello! we will seek you, dear Cyclops, bleating, and if we find you with your wallet full of fresh herbs, all disgusting in your filth, sodden with wine and sleeping in the midst of your sheep, we will seize a great flaming stake and burn out your eye.

CARIO. I will copy that Circé of Corinth, whose potent philtres compelled the companions of Philonides to swallow balls of dung, which she herself had kneaded with her hands, as if they were swine; and do you too grunt with joy and follow your mother, my little pigs.

CHORUS. Oh! Circé with the potent philtres, who besmear your companions so filthily, what pleasure I shall have in imitating the son of Laertes! I will hang you up by your testicles, I will rub your nose with dung like a goat, and like Aristyllus you shall say through your half-opened lips, "Follow your mother, my little pigs."

CARIO. Enough of tomfoolery, assume a grave demeanour; unknown to my master I am going to take bread and meat; and when I have fed well, I shall resume my work.

CHREMYLUS. To say, "Hail! my dear neighbours!" is an old form of greeting and well worn with use; so therefore I embrace you, because you have not crept like tortoises, but have come rushing here in all haste. Now help me to watch carefully and closely over the god.

CHORUS. Be at ease. You shall see with what martial zeal I will guard him. What! we jostle each other at the Assembly for three obols, and am I going to let Plutus in person be stolen from me?

CHREMYLUS. But I see Blepsidemus; by his bearing and his haste I can readily see he knows or suspects something.

BLEPSIDEMUS. What has happened then? Whence, how has Chremylus suddenly grown rich? I don't believe a word of it. Nevertheless, nothing but his sudden fortune was being talked about in the barbers' booths. But I am above all surprised that his good fortune has not made him forget his friends; that is not the usual way!

CHREMYLUS. By the gods, Blepsidemus, I will hide nothing from you. To-day things are better than yesterday; let us share, for are you not my friend?

BLEPSIDEMUS. Have you really grown rich as they say?

CHREMYLUS I shall be soon, if the god agrees to it. But there is still some risk to run.

BLEPSIDEMUS. What risk?

CHREMYLUS. What risk?

BLEPSIDEMUS. What do you mean? Explain.

CHREMYLUS. If we succeed, we are happy for ever, but if we fail, it is all over with us.

BLEPSIDEMUS. 'Tis a bad business, and one that doesn't please me! To grow rich all at once and yet to be fearful! ah! I suspect something that's little good.

CHREMYLUS. What do you mean, that's little good?

BLEPSIDEMUS. No doubt you have just stolen some gold and silver from some temple and are repenting.

CHREMYLUS. Nay! heaven preserve me from that!

BLEPSIDEMUS. A truce to idle phrases! the thing is only too apparent, my friend.

CHREMYLUS. Don't suspect such a thing of me.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Alas! then there is no honest man! not one, that can resist the attraction of gold!

CHREMYLUS. By Demeter, you have no common sense.

BLEPSIDEMUS. To have to persist like this in denial one's whole life long!

CHREMYLUS. But, good gods, you are mad, my dear fellow!

BLEPSIDEMUS. His very look is distraught; he has done some crime!

CHREMYLUS. Ah! I know the tune you are playing now; you think I have stolen, and want your share.

BLEPSIDEMUS. My share of what, pray?

CHREMYLUS. You are beside the mark; the thing is quite otherwise.

BLEPSIDEMUS. 'Tis perhaps not a theft, but some piece of knavery!

CHREMYLUS. You are insane!

BLEPSIDEMUS. What? You have done no man an injury?

CHREMYLUS. No! assuredly not!

BLEPSIDEMUS. But, great gods, what am I to think? You won't tell me the truth.

CHREMYLUS. You accuse me without really knowing anything.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Listen, friend, no doubt the matter can yet be hushed up, before it gets noised abroad, at trifling expense; I will buy the orators' silence.

CHREMYLUS. Aye, you will lay out three minae and, as my friend, you will reckon twelve against me.

BLEPSIDEMUS. I know someone who will come and seat himself at the foot of the tribunal, holding a supplicant's bough in his hand and surrounded by his wife and children, for all the world like the Heraclidae of Pamphilus.

CHREMYLUS. Not at all, poor fool! But, thanks to me, worthy folk, intelligent and moderate men alone shall be rich henceforth.

BLEPSIDEMUS. What are you saying? Have you then stolen so much as all that?

CHREMYLUS. Oh! your insults will be the death of me.

BLEPSIDEMUS. 'Tis rather you yourself who are courting death.

CHREMYLUS. Not so, you wretch, since I have Plutus.

BLEPSIDEMUS. You have Plutus? Which one?

CHREMYLUS. The god himself.

BLEPSIDEMUS. And where is he?

CHREMYLUS. There.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Where?

CHREMYLUS. Indoors.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Indoors?

CHREMYLUS. Aye, certainly.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Get you gone! Plutus in your house?

CHREMYLUS. Yes, by the gods!

BLEPSIDEMUS. Are you telling me the truth?

CHREMYLUS. I am.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Swear it by Hestia.

CHREMYLUS. I swear it by Posidon.

BLEPSIDEMUS. The god of the sea?

CHREMYLUS. Aye, and by all the other Posidons, if such there be.

BLEPSIDEMUS. And you don't send him to us, to your friends?

CHREMYLUS. We've not got to that point yet.

BLEPSIDEMUS. What do you say? Is there no chance of sharing?

CHREMYLUS. Why, no. We must first …

BLEPSIDEMUS. Do what?

CHREMYLUS. … restore him his sight.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Restore whom his sight? Speak!

CHREMYLUS. Plutus. It must be done, no matter how.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Is he then really blind?

CHREMYLUS. Yes, undoubtedly.

BLEPSIDEMUS. I am no longer surprised he never came to me.

CHREMYLUS. And it please the gods, he'll come there now.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Must we not go and seek a physician?

CHREMYLUS. Seek physicians at Athens? Nay! there's no art where there's no fee.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Let's bethink ourselves well.

CHREMYLUS. There is not one.

BLEPSIDEMUS. 'Tis a positive fact, I don't know of one.

CHREMYLUS. But I have thought the matter well over, and the best thing is to make Plutus lie in the Temple of Aesculapius.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Aye, unquestionably 'tis the very best thing. Be quick and

lead him away to the Temple.

CHREMYLUS. I am going there.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Then hurry yourself.

CHREMYLUS. 'Tis just what I am doing.

POVERTY. Unwise, perverse, unholy men! What are you daring to do, you pitiful, wretched mortals? Whither are you flying? Stop! I command it!

BLEPSIDEMUS. Oh! great gods!

POVERTY. My arm shall destroy you, you infamous beings! Such an attempt is not to be borne; neither man nor god has ever dared the like. You shall die!

CHREMYLUS. And who are you? Oh! what a ghastly pallor!

BLEPSIDEMUS. 'Tis perchance some Erinnys, some Fury, from the theatre; there's a kind of wild tragedy look in her eyes.

CHREMYLUS. But she has no torch.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Let's knock her down!

POVERTY. Who do you think I am?

CHREMYLUS. Some wine-shop keeper or egg-woman. Otherwise you would not have shrieked so loud at us, who have done nothing to you.

POVERTY. Indeed? And have you not done me the most deadly injury by seeking to banish me from every country?

CHREMYLUS. Why, have you not got the Barathrum left? But who are you? Answer me quickly!

POVERTY. I am one that will punish you this very day for having wanted to make me disappear from here.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Might it be the tavern-keeper in my neighbourhood, who is always cheating me in measure?

POVERTY. I am Poverty, who have lived with you for so many years.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Oh! great Apollo! oh, ye gods! whither shall I fly?

CHREMYLUS. Now then! what are you doing? You poltroon! Will you kindly stop here?

BLEPSIDEMUS. Not I.

CHREMYLUS. Will you have the goodness to stop. Are two men to fly from a woman?

BLEPSIDEMUS. But, you wretch, 'tis Poverty, the most fearful monster that ever drew breath.

CHREMYLUS. Stay where you are, I beg of you.

BLEPSIDEMUS. No! no! a thousand times, no!

CHREMYLUS. Could we do anything worse than leave the god in the lurch and fly before this woman without so much as ever offering to fight?

BLEPSIDEMUS. But what weapons have we? Are we in a condition to show fight? Where is the breastplate, the buckler, that this wretch has not pledged?

CHREMYLUS. Be at ease. Plutus will readily triumph over her threats unaided.

POVERTY. Dare you reply, you scoundrels, you who are caught red-handed at the most horrible crime?

CHREMYLUS. As for you, you cursed jade, you pursue me with your abuse, though I have never done you the slightest harm.

POVERTY. Do you think it is doing me no harm to restore Plutus to the use of his eyes?

CHREMYLUS. Is this doing you harm, that we shower blessings on all men?

POVERTY. And what do you think will ensure their happiness?

CHREMYLUS. Ah! first of all we shall drive you out of Greece.

POVERTY. Drive me out? Could you do mankind a greater harm?

CHREMYLUS. Yes — if I gave up my intention to deliver them from you.

POVERTY. Well, let us discuss this point first. I propose to show that I am the sole cause of all your blessings, and that your safety depends on me alone. If I don't succeed, then do what you like to me.

CHREMYLUS. How dare you talk like this, you impudent hussy?

POVERTY. Agree to hear me and I think it will be very easy for me to prove that you are entirely on the wrong road, when you want to make the just men wealthy.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Oh! cudgel and rope's end, come to my help!

POVERTY. Why such wrath and these shouts, before you hear my arguments?

BLEPSIDEMUS. But who could listen to such words without exclaiming?

POVERTY. Any man of sense.

CHREMYLUS. But if you lose your case, what punishment will you submit to?

POVERTY. Choose what you will.

CHREMYLUS. That's all right.

POVERTY. You shall suffer the same if you are beaten!

CHREMYLUS. Do you think twenty deaths a sufficiently large stake?

BLEPSIDEMUS. Good enough for her, but for us two would suffice.

POVERTY. You won't escape, for is there indeed a single valid argument to oppose me with?

CHORUS. To beat her in this debate, you must call upon all your wits.
Make no allowances and show no weakness!

CHREMYLUS. It is right that the good should be happy, that the wicked and the

impious, on the other hand, should be miserable; that is a truth, I believe, which no one will gainsay. To realize this condition of things is as great a proposal as it is noble and useful in every respect, and we have found a means of attaining the object of our wishes. If Plutus recovers his sight and ceases from wandering about unseeing and at random, he will go to seek the just men and never leave them again; he will shun the perverse and ungodly; so, thanks to him, all men will become honest, rich and pious. Can anything better be conceived for the public weal?

BLEPSIDEMUS. Of a certainty, no! I bear witness to that. It is not even necessary she should reply.

CHREMYLUS. Does it not seem that everything is extravagance in the world, or rather madness, when you watch the way things go? A crowd of rogues enjoy blessings they have won by sheer injustice, while more honest folks are miserable, die of hunger, and spend their whole lives with you.

CHORUS. Yes, if Plutus became clear-sighted again and drove out Poverty, ’twould be the greatest blessing possible for the human race.

POVERTY. Here are two old men, whose brains are easy to confuse, who assist each other to talk rubbish and drivel to their hearts’ content. But if your wishes were realized, your profit would be great! Let Plutus recover his sight and divide his favours out equally to all, and none will ply either trade or art any longer; all toil would be done away with. Who would wish to hammer iron, build ships, sew, turn, cut up leather, bake bricks, bleach linen, tan hides, or break up the soil of the earth with the plough and garner the gifts of Demeter, if he could live in idleness and free from all this work?

CHREMYLUS. What nonsense all this is! All these trades which you just mention will be plied by our slaves.

POVERTY. Your slaves! And by what means will these slaves be got?

CHREMYLUS. We will buy them.

POVERTY. But first say, who will sell them, if everyone is rich?

CHREMYLUS. Some greedy dealer from Thessaly — the land which supplies so many.

POVERTY. But if your system is applied, there won't be a single slave-dealer left. What rich man would risk his life to devote himself to this traffic? You will have to toil, to dig and submit yourself to all kinds of hard labour; so that your life would be more wretched even than it is now.

CHREMYLUS. May this prediction fall upon yourself!

POVERTY. You will not be able to sleep in a bed, for no more will ever be manufactured; nor on carpets, for who would weave them if he had gold? When you bring a young bride to your dwelling, you will have no essences wherewith to perfume her, nor rich embroidered cloaks dyed with dazzling colours in which to clothe her. And yet what is the use of being rich, if you are to be deprived of all these enjoyments? On the other hand, you have all that you need in abundance, thanks to me; to the artisan I am like a severe mistress, who forces him by need and poverty to seek the means of earning his livelihood.

CHREMYLUS. And what good thing can you give us, unless it be burns in the bath, and swarms of brats and old women who cry with hunger, and clouds uncountable of lice, gnats and flies, which hover about the wretch's head, trouble him, awake him and say, "You will be hungry, but get up!" Besides, to possess a rag in place of a mantle, a pallet of rushes swarming with bugs, that do not let you close your eyes for a bed; a rotten piece of matting for a coverlet; a big stone for a pillow, on which to lay your head; to eat mallow roots instead of bread, and leaves of withered radish instead of cake; to have nothing but the cover of a broken jug for a stool, the stave of a cask, and broken at that, for a kneading-trough, that is the life you make for us! Are these the mighty benefits with which you pretend to load mankind?

POVERTY. 'Tis not my life that you describe; you are attacking the existence beggars lead.

CHREMYLUS. Is beggary not Poverty's sister?

POVERTY. Thrasybulus and Dionysius are one and the same according to you. No, my life is not like that and never will be. The beggar, whom you have depicted to us, never possesses anything. The poor man lives thriftily and attentive to his work; he has not got too much, but he does not lack what he really needs.

CHREMYLUS. Oh! what a happy life, by Demeter! to live sparingly, to toil

incessantly and not to leave enough to pay for a tomb!

POVERTY. That's it! Jest, jeer, and never talk seriously! But what you don't know is this, that men with me are worth more, both in mind and body, than with Plutus. With him they are gouty, big-bellied, heavy of limb and scandalously stout; with me they are thin, wasp-waisted, and terrible to the foe.

CHREMYLUS. 'Tis no doubt by starving them that you give them that waspish waist.

POVERTY. As for behaviour, I will prove to you that modesty dwells with me and insolence with Plutus.

CHREMYLUS. Oh! the sweet modesty of stealing and breaking through walls.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Aye, the thief is truly modest, for he hides himself.

POVERTY. Look at the orators in our republics; as long as they are poor, both State and people can only praise their uprightness; but once they are fattened on the public funds, they conceive a hatred for justice, plan intrigues against the people and attack the democracy.

CHREMYLUS. That is absolutely true, although your tongue is very vile. But it matters not, so don't put on those triumphant airs; you shall not be punished any the less for having tried to persuade me that poverty is worth more than wealth.

POVERTY. Not being able to refute my arguments, you chatter at random and exert yourself to no purpose.

CHREMYLUS. Then tell me this, why does all mankind flee from you?

POVERTY. Because I make them better. Children do the very same; they flee from the wise counsels of their fathers. So difficult is it to see one's true interest.

CHREMYLUS. Will you say that Zeus cannot discern what is best? Well, he takes Plutus to himself …

BLEPSIDEMUS. … and banishes Poverty to earth.

POVERTY. Ah me! how purblind you are, you old fellows of the days of Saturn! Why, Zeus is poor, and I will clearly prove it to you. In the

Olympic games, which he founded, and to which he convokes the whole of Greece every four years, why does he only crown the victorious athletes with wild olive? If he were rich he would give them gold.

CHREMYLUS. 'Tis in that way he shows that he clings to his wealth; he is sparing with it, won't part with any portion of it, only bestows baubles on the victors and keeps his money for himself.

POVERTY. But wealth coupled to such sordid greed is yet more shameful than poverty.

CHREMYLUS. May Zeus destroy you, both you and your chaplet of wild olive!

POVERTY. Thus you dare to maintain that poverty is not the fount of all blessings!

CHREMYLUS. Ask Hecaté whether it is better to be rich or starving; she will tell you that the rich send her a meal every month and that the poor make it disappear before it is even served. But go and hang yourself and don't breathe another syllable. I will not be convinced against my will.

POVERTY. "Oh! citizens of Argos! do you hear what he says?"

CHREMYLUS. Invoke Pauson, your boon companion, rather.

POVERTY. Alas! what is to become of me?

CHREMYLUS. Get you gone, be off quick and a pleasant journey to you.

POVERTY. But where shall I go?

CHREMYLUS. To gaol; but hurry up, let us put an end to this.

POVERTY. One day you will recall me.

CHREMYLUS. Then you can return; but disappear for the present. I prefer to be rich; you are free to knock your head against the walls in your rage.

BLEPSIDEMUS. And I too welcome wealth. I want, when I leave the bath all perfumed with essences, to feast bravely with my wife and children and to break

wind in the faces of toilers and Poverty.

CHREMYLUS. So that hussy has gone at last! But let us make haste to put Plutus to bed in the Temple of Aesculapius.

BLEPSIDEMUS. Let us make haste; else some bothering fellow may again come to interrupt us.

CHREMYLUS. Cario, bring the coverlets and all that I have got ready from the house; let us conduct the god to the Temple, taking care to observe all the proper rites.

CHORUS. *[Missing.]*

CARIO. Oh! you old fellows, who used to dip out the broth served to the poor at the festival of Theseus with little pieces of bread hollowed like a spoon, how worthy of envy is your fate! How happy you are, both you and all just men!

CHORUS. My good fellow, what has happened to your friends? You seem the bearer of good tidings.

CARIO. What joy for my master and even more for Plutus! The god has regained his sight; his eyes sparkle with the greatest brilliancy, thanks to the benevolent care of Aesculapius.

CHORUS. Oh! what transports of joy! oh! What shouts of gladness!

CARIO. Aye! one is compelled to rejoice, whether one will or not.

CHORUS. I will sing to the honour of Aesculapius, the son of illustrious Zeus, with a resounding voice; he is the beneficent star which men adore.

CHREMYLUS' WIFE. What mean these shouts? Is there good news. With what impatience have I been waiting in the house, and for so long too!

CARIO. Quick! quick! some wine, mistress. And drink yourself, for 'tis much to your taste; I bring you all blessings in a lump.

WIFE. Where are they?

CARIO. In my words, as you are going to see.

WIFE. Have done with trifling! come, speak.

CARIO. Listen, I am going to tell you everything from the feet to the head.

WIFE. Ah! don't throw anything at my head.

CARIO. Not even the happiness that has come to you?

WIFE. No, no, nothing … to annoy me.

CARIO. Having arrived near to the Temple with our patient, then so unfortunate, but now at the apex of happiness, of blessedness, we first led him down to the sea to purify him.

WIFE. Ah! what a singular pleasure for an old man to bathe in the cold sea-water!

CARIO. Then we repaired to the Temple of the god. Once the wafers and the various offerings had been consecrated upon the altar, and the cake of wheaten-meal had been handed over to the devouring Hephaestus, we made Plutus lie on a couch according to the rite, and each of us prepared himself a bed of leaves.

WIFE. Had any other folk come to beseech the deity?

CARIO. Yes. Firstly, Neoclides, who is blind, but steals much better than those who see clearly; then many others attacked by complaints of all kinds. The lights were put out and the priest enjoined us to sleep, especially recommending us to keep silent should we hear any noise. There we were all lying down quite quietly. I could not sleep; I was thinking of a certain stew-pan full of pap placed close to an old woman and just behind her head. I had a furious longing to slip towards that side. But just as I was lifting my head, I noticed the priest, who was sweeping off both the cakes and the figs on the sacred table; then he made the round of the altars and sanctified the cakes that remained, by stowing them away in a bag. I therefore resolved to follow such a pious example and made straight for the pap.

WIFE. You wretch! and had you no fear of the god?

CARIO. Aye, indeed! I feared that the god with his crown on his head might have been near the stew-pan before me. I said to myself, “Like priest, like god.” On hearing the noise I made, the old woman put out her hand, but I hissed and bit it, just as a sacred serpent might have done. Quick she drew back her hand, slipped down into the bed with her head beneath the coverlets and never moved again; only she let go some wind in her fear which stunk worse than a weasel. As for myself, I swallowed a goodly portion of the pap and, having made a good feed, went back to bed.

WIFE. And did not the god come?

CAIRO. He did not tarry; and when he was near us, oh! dear! such a good joke happened. My belly was quite blown out, and I let wind with the loudest of noises.

WIFE. Doubtless the god pulled a wry face?

CARIO. No, but Iaso blushed a little and Panacea turned her head away, holding her nose; for my perfume is not that of roses.

WIFE. And what did the god do?

CARIO. He paid not the slightest heed.

WIFE. He must then be a pretty coarse kind of god?

CARIO. I don’t say that, but he’s used to tasting shit.

WIFE. Impudent knave, go on with you!

CARIO. Then I hid myself in my bed all a-tremble. Aesculapius did the round of the patients and examined them all with great attention; then a slave placed beside him a stone mortar, a pestle and a little box.

WIFE. Of stone?

CARIO. No, not of stone.

WIFE. But how could you see all this, you arch-rascal, when you say you were hiding all the time?

CARIO. Why, great gods, through my cloak, for 'tis not without holes! He first prepared an ointment for Neoclides; he threw three heads of Tenian garlic into the mortar, pounded them with an admixture of fig-tree sap and lentisk, moistened the whole with Sphettian vinegar, and, turning back the patient's eyelids, applied his salve to the interior of the eyes, so that the pain might be more excruciating. Neoclides shrieked, howled, sprang towards the foot of his bed and wanted to bolt, but the god laughed and said to him, "Keep where you are with your salve; by doing this you will not go and perjure yourself before the Assembly."

WIFE What a wise god and what a friend to our city!

CARIO. Thereupon he came and seated himself at the head of Plutus' bed, took a perfectly clean rag and wiped his eyelids; Panacea covered his head and face with a purple cloth, while the god whistled, and two enormous snakes came rushing from the sanctuary.

WIFE. Great gods!

CARIO. They slipped gently beneath the purple cloth and, as far as I could judge, licked the patient's eyelids; for, in less time than even you need, mistress, to drain down ten beakers of wine, Plutus rose up; he could see. I clapped my hands with joy and awoke my master, and the god immediately disappeared with the serpents into the sanctuary. As for those who were lying near Plutus, you can imagine that they embraced him tenderly. Dawn broke and not one of them had closed an eye. As for myself, I did not cease thanking the god who had so quickly restored to Plutus his sight and had made Neoclides blinder than ever.

WIFE. Oh! thou great Aesculapius! How mighty is thy power! *(To Cario.)*
But tell me, where is Plutus now?

CARIO. He is approaching, escorted by an immense crowd. The rich, whose wealth is ill-gotten, are knitting their brows and shooting at him looks of fierce hate, while the just folk, who led a wretched existence, embrace him and grasp his hand in the transport of their joy; they follow in his wake, their heads wreathed with garlands, laughing and blessing their deliverer; the old men make the earth resound as they walk together keeping time. Come, all of you, all, down to the very least, dance, leap and form yourselves into a chorus; no longer do you risk being told, when you go home, "There is no meal in the bag."

WIFE. And I, by Hecate! I will string you a garland of cakes for the good tidings you have brought me.

CARIO. Hurry, make haste then; our friends are close at hand.

WIFE. I will go indoors to fetch some gifts of welcome, to celebrate these eyes that have just been opened.

CARIO. Meantime I am going forth to meet them.

CHORUS. *[Missing.]*

PLUTUS. I adore thee, oh! thou divine sun, and thee I greet thou city, the beloved of Pallas; be welcome, thou land of Cecrops, which hast received me. Alas! what manner of men I associated with! I blush to think of it. While, on the other hand, I shunned those who deserved my friendship; I knew neither the vices of the ones nor the virtues of the others. A twofold mistake, and in both cases equally fatal! Ah! what a misfortune was mine! But I want to change everything; and in future I mean to prove to mankind that, if I gave to the wicked, 'twas against my will.

CHREMYLUS *(to the crowd who impede him)*. Get you gone! Oh! what a lot of friends spring into being when you are fortunate! They dig me with their elbows and bruise my shins to prove their affection. Each one wants to greet me. What a crowd of old fellows thronged round me on the marketplace!

WIFE. Oh! thou, who art dearest of all to me, and thou too, be welcome! Allow me, Plutus, to shower these gifts of welcome over you in due accord with custom.

PLUTUS. No. This is the first house I enter after having regained my sight; I shall take nothing from it, for 'tis my place rather to give.

WIFE. Do you refuse these gifts?

PLUTUS. I will accept them at your fireside, as custom requires. Besides, we shall thus avoid a ridiculous scene; it is not meet that the poet should throw dried figs and dainties to the spectators; 'tis a vulgar trick to make 'em laugh.

WIFE. You are right. Look! yonder's Dexinicus, who was already getting to his

feet to catch the figs as they flew past him.

CHORUS. *[Missing.]*

CARIO. How pleasant it is, friends, to live well, especially when it costs nothing! What a deluge of blessings flood our household, and that too without our having wronged ever a soul! Ah! what a delightful thing is wealth! The bin is full of white flour and the wine-jars run over with fragrant liquor; all the chests are crammed with gold and silver, 'tis a sight to see; the tank is full of oil, the phials with perfumes, and the garret with dried figs. Vinegar flasks, plates, stew-pots and all the platters are of brass; our rotten old wooden trenchers for the fish have to-day become dishes of silver; the very night-commode is of ivory. We others, the slaves, we play at odd and even with gold pieces, and carry luxury so far that we no longer wipe ourselves with stones, but use garlic stalks instead. My master, at this moment, is crowned with flowers and sacrificing a pig, a goat and a ram; 'tis the smoke that has driven me out, for I could no longer endure it, it hurt my eyes so.

A JUST MAN. Come, my child, come with me. Let us go and find the god.

CHREMYLUS. Who comes here?

JUST MAN. A man who was once wretched, but now is happy.

CHREMYLUS. A just man then?

JUST MAN. You have it.

CHREMYLUS. Well! what do you want?

JUST MAN. I come to thank the god for all the blessings he has showered on me. My father had left me a fairly decent fortune, and I helped those of my friends who were in want; 'twas, to my thinking, the most useful thing I could do with my fortune.

CHREMYLUS. And you were quickly ruined?

JUST MAN. Entirely.

CHREMYLUS. Since then you have been living in misery?

JUST MAN. In truth I have; I thought I could count, in case of need, upon the friends whose property I had helped, but they turned their backs upon me and pretended not to see me.

CHREMYLUS. They laughed at you, 'tis evident.

JUST MAN. Just so. With my empty coffers, I had no more friends.

CHREMYLUS. But your lot has changed.

JUST MAN. Yes, and so I come to the god to make him the acts of gratitude that are his due.

CHREMYLUS. But with what object now do you bring this old cloak, which your slave is carrying? Tell me.

JUST MAN. I wish to dedicate it to the god.

CHREMYLUS. Were you initiated into the Great Mysteries in that cloak?

JUST MAN. No, but I shivered in it for thirteen years.

CHREMYLUS. And this footwear?

JUST MAN. These also are my winter companions.

CHREMYLUS. And you wish to dedicate them too?

JUST MAN. Unquestionably.

CHREMYLUS. Fine presents to offer to the god!

AN INFORMER. Alas! alas! I am a lost man. Ah! thrice, four, five, twelve times, or rather ten thousand times unhappy fate! Why, why must fortune deal me such rough blows?

CHREMYLUS. Oh, Apollo, my tutelary! oh! ye favourable gods! what has overtaken this man?

INFORMER. Ah! am I not deserving of pity? I have lost everything; this cursed god has stripped me bare. Ah! if there be justice in heaven, he shall be struck

blind again.

JUST MAN. Methinks I know what's the matter. If this man is unfortunate, 'tis because he's of little account and small honesty; and i' faith he looks it too.

CHREMYLUS. Then, by Zeus! his plight is but just.

INFORMER. He promised that if he recovered his sight, he would enrich us all unaided; whereas he has ruined more than one.

CHREMYLUS. But whom has he thus illused?

INFORMER. Me.

CHREMYLUS. You were doubtless a villainous thief then.

INFORMER *(to Chremylus and Cario)*. 'Tis rather you yourselves who were such wretches; I am certain you have got my money.

CHREMYLUS. Ha! by Demeter! 'tis an informer. What impudence!

CARIO. He's ravenously hungry, that's certain.

INFORMER. You shall follow me this very instant to the marketplace, where the torture of the wheel shall force the confession of your misdeeds from you.

CARIO. Ha! look out for yourself!

JUST MAN. By Zeus the Deliverer, what gratitude all Greeks owe to Plutus, if he destroys these vile informers!

INFORMER. You are laughing at me. Ho! ho! I denounce you as their accomplice. Where did you steal that new cloak from? Yesterday I saw you with one utterly worn out.

JUST MAN. I fear you not, thanks to this ring, for which I paid
Eudemus a drachma.

CHREMYLUS. Ah! there's no ring to preserve you from the informer's bite.

INFORMER. The insolent wretches! But, my fine jokers, you have not told me

what you are up to here. Nothing good, I'll be bound.

CHREMYLUS. Nothing of any good for you, be sure of that.

INFORMER. By Zeus! you're going to dine at my expense!

CHREMYLUS. You vile impostor, may you burst with an empty belly, both you and your witness.

INFORMER. You deny it? I reckon, you villians, that there is much salt fish and roast meat in this house. Hu! hu! hu! hu! hu! hu! *(He sniffs.)* CHREMYLUS. Can you smell anything, rascal?

INFORMER. Can such outrages be borne, oh, Zeus! Ye gods! how cruel it is to see me treated thus, when I am such an honest fellow and such a good citizen!

CHREMYLUS. You an honest man! you a good citizen!

INFORMER. A better one than any.

CHREMYLUS. Ah! well then, answer my questions.

INFORMER. Concerning what?

CHREMYLUS. Are you a husbandman?

INFORMER. D'ye take me for a fool?

CHREMYLUS. A merchant?

INFORMER. I assume the title, when it serves me.

CHREMYLUS. Do you ply any trade?

INFORMER. No, most assuredly not!

CHREMYLUS. Then how do you live, if you do nothing?

INFORMER. I superintend public and private business.

CHREMYLUS. You! And by what right, pray?

INFORMER. Because it pleases me to do so.

CHREMYLUS. Like a thief you sneak yourself in where you have no business. You are hated by all and you claim to be an honest man?

INFORMER. What, you fool? I have not the right to dedicate myself entirely to my country's service?

CHREMYLUS. Is the country served by vile intrigue?

INFORMER. It is served by watching that the established law is observed — by allowing no one to violate it.

CHREMYLUS. That's the duty of the tribunals; they are established to that end.

INFORMER. And who is the prosecutor before the dicasts?

CHREMYLUS. Whoever wishes to be.

INFORMER. Well then, 'tis I who choose to be prosecutor; and thus all public affairs fall within my province.

CHREMYLUS. I pity Athens for being in such vile clutches. But would you not prefer to live quietly and free from all care and anxiety?

INFORMER. To do nothing is to live an animal's life.

CHREMYLUS. Thus you will not change your mode of life?

INFORMER. No, though they gave me Plutus himself and the *silphium* of Battus.

CHREMYLUS *(to the Informer)*. Come, quick, off with your cloak.

CARIO. Hi! friend! 'tis you they are speaking to.

CHREMYLUS. Off with your shoes.

CARIO. All this is addressed to you.

INFORMER. Very well! let one of you come near me, if he dares.

CARIO. I dare.

INFORMER. Alas! I am robbed of my clothes in full daylight.

CARIO. That's what comes of meddling with other folk's business and living at their expense.

INFORMER *(to his witness)*. You see what is happening; I call you to witness.

CHREMYLUS. Look how the witness whom you brought is taking to his heels.

INFORMER. Great gods! I am all alone and they assault me.

CARIO. Shout away!

INFORMER. Oh! woe, woe is me!

CARIO. Give me that old ragged cloak, that I may dress out the informer.

JUST MAN. No, no; I have dedicated it to Plutus.

CARIO. And where would your offering be better bestowed than on the shoulders of a rascal and a thief? To Plutus fine, rich cloaks should be given.

JUST MAN. And what then shall be done with these shoes? Tell me.

CARIO. I will nail them to his brow as gifts are nailed to the trunks of the wild olive.

INFORMER. I'm off, for you are the strongest, I own. But if I find someone to join me, let him be as weak as he will, I will summon this god, who thinks himself so strong, before the Court this very day, and denounce him as manifestly guilty of overturning the democracy by his will alone and without the consent of the Senate or the popular Assembly.

JUST MAN. Now that you are rigged out from head to foot with my old clothes, hasten to the bath and stand there in the front row to warm yourself better; 'tis the place I formerly had.

CHREMYLUS. Ah! the bath-man would grip you by the testicles and fling you through the door; he would only need to see you to appraise you at your true

value…. But let us go in, friend, that you may address your thanksgivings to the god.

CHORUS. *[Missing.]*

AN OLD WOMAN. Dear old men, am I near the house where the new god lives, or have I missed the road?

CHORUS. You are at his door, my pretty little maid, who question us so sweetly.

OLD WOMAN. Then I will summon someone in the house.

CHREMYLUS. 'Tis needless! I am here myself. But what matter brings you here?

OLD WOMAN. Ah! a cruel, unjust fate! My dear friend, this god has made life unbearable to me through ceasing to be blind.

CHREMYLUS. What does this mean? Can you be a female informer?

OLD WOMAN. Most certainly not.

CHREMYLUS. Have you not drunk up your money then?

OLD WOMAN. You are mocking me! Nay! I am being devoured with a consuming fire.

CHREMYLUS. Then tell me what is consuming you so fiercely.

OLD WOMAN. Listen! I loved a young man, who was poor, but so handsome, so well-built, so honest! He readily gave way to all I desired and acquitted himself so well! I, for my part, refused him nothing.

CHREMYLUS. And what did he generally ask of you.

OLD WOMAN. Very little; he bore himself towards me with astonishing discretion! perchance twenty drachmae for a cloak or eight for footwear; sometimes he begged me to buy tunics for his sisters or a little mantle for his mother; at times he needed four bushels of corn.

CHREMYLUS. ’Twas very little, in truth; I admire his modesty.

OLD WOMAN. And ’twas not as a reward for his complacency that he ever asked me for anything, but as a matter of pure friendship; a cloak I had given would remind him from whom he had got it.

CHREMYLUS. ’Twas a fellow who loved you madly.

OLD WOMAN. But ’tis no longer so, for the faithless wretch has sadly altered! I had sent him this cake with the sweetmeats you see here on this dish and let him know that I would visit him in the evening….

CHREMYLUS. Well?

OLD WOMAN. He sent me back my presents and added this tart to them, on condition that I never set foot in his house again. Besides, he sent me this message, “Once upon a time the Milesians were brave.”

CHREMYLUS. An honest lad, indeed! But what would you? When poor, he would devour anything; now he is rich, he no longer cares for lentils.

OLD WOMAN. Formerly he came to me every day.

CHREMYLUS. To see if you were being buried?

OLD WOMAN. No! he longed to hear the sound of my voice.

CHREMYLUS. And to carry off some present.

OLD WOMAN. If I was downcast, he would call me his little duck or his little dove in a most tender manner….

CHREMYLUS. And then would ask for the wherewithal to buy a pair of shoes.

OLD WOMAN. When I was at the Mysteries of Eleusis in a carriage, someone looked at me; he was so jealous that he beat me the whole of that day.

CHREMYLUS. ’Twas because he liked to feed alone.

OLD WOMAN. He told me I had very beautiful hands.

CHREMYLUS. Aye, no doubt, when they handed him twenty drachmae.

OLD WOMAN. That my whole body breathed a sweet perfume.

CHREMYLUS. Yes, like enough, if you poured him out Thasian wine.

OLD WOMAN. That my glance was gentle and charming.

CHREMYLUS. 'Twas no fool. He knew how to drag drachmae from a hot-blooded old woman.

OLD WOMAN. Ah! the god has done very, very wrong, saying he would support the victims of injustice.

CHREMYLUS. Well, what must he do? Speak, and it shall be done.

OLD WOMAN. 'Tis right to compel him, whom I have loaded with benefits, to repay them in his turn; if not, he does not merit the least of the god's favours.

CHREMYLUS. And did he not do this every night?

OLD WOMAN. He swore he would never leave me, as long as I lived.

CHREMYLUS. Aye, rightly; but he thinks you are no longer alive.

OLD WOMAN. Ah! friend, I am pining away with grief.

CHREMYLUS. You are rotting away, it seems to me.

OLD WOMAN. I have grown so thin, I could slip through a ring.

CHREMYLUS. Yes, if 'twere as large as the hoop of a sieve.

OLD WOMAN. But here is the youth, the cause of my complaint; he looks as though he were going to a festival.

CHREMYLUS. Yes, if his chaplet and his torch are any guides.

YOUTH. Greeting to you.

OLD WOMAN. What does he say?

YOUTH. My ancient old dear, you have grown white very quickly, by heaven!

OLD WOMAN. Oh! what an insult!

CHREMYLUS. It is a long time, then, since he saw you?

OLD WOMAN. A long time? My god! he was with me yesterday.

CHREMYLUS. It must be, then, that, unlike other people, he sees more clearly when he's drunk.

OLD WOMAN. No, but I have always known him for an insolent fellow.

YOUTH. Oh! divine Posidon! Oh, ye gods of old age! what wrinkles she has on her face!

OLD WOMAN. Oh! oh! keep your distance with that torch.

CHREMYLUS. Yes, 'twould be as well; if a single spark were to reach her, she would catch alight like an old olive branch.

YOUTH. I propose to have a game with you.

OLD WOMAN. Where, naughty boy?

YOUTH. Here. Take some nuts in your hand.

OLD WOMAN. What game is this?

YOUTH. Let's play at guessing how many teeth you have.

CHREMYLUS. Ah! I'll tell you; she's got three, or perhaps four.

YOUTH. Pay up; you've lost! she has only one single grinder.

OLD WOMAN. You wretch! you're not in your right senses. Do you insult me thus before this crowd?

YOUTH. I am washing you thoroughly; 'tis doing you a service.

CHREMYLUS. No, no! as she is there, she can still deceive; but if this white-

lead is washed off, her wrinkles would come out plainly.

OLD WOMAN. You are only an old fool!

YOUTH. Ah! he is playing the gallant, he is fondling your breasts, and thinks I do not see it.

OLD WOMAN. Oh! no, by Aphrodité, no, you naughty jealous fellow.

CHREMYLUS. Oh! most certainly not, by Hecaté! Verily and indeed I would need to be mad! But, young man, I cannot forgive you, if you cast off this beautiful child.

YOUTH. Why, I adore her.

CHREMYLUS. But nevertheless she accuses you …

YOUTH. Accuses me of what?

CHREMYLUS. … of having told her insolently, "Once upon a time the Milesians were brave."

YOUTH. Oh! I shall not dispute with you about her.

CHREMYLUS. Why not?

YOUTH. Out of respect for your age; with anyone but you, I should not be so easy; come, take the girl and be happy.

CHREMYLUS. I see, I see; you don't want her any more.

OLD WOMAN. Nay! this is a thing that cannot be allowed.

YOUTH. I cannot argue with a woman, who has been making love these thirteen thousand years.

CHREMYLUS. Yet, since you liked the wine, you should now consume the lees.

YOUTH. But these lees are quite rancid and fusty.

CHREMYLUS. Pass them through a straining-cloth; they'll clarify.

YOUTH. But I want to go in with you to offer these chaplets to the god.

OLD WOMAN. And I too have something to tell him.

YOUTH. Then I don't enter.

CHREMYLUS. Come, have no fear; she won't harm you.

YOUTH. 'Tis true; I've been managing the old bark long enough.

OLD WOMAN. Go in; I'll follow after you.

CHREMYLUS. Good gods! that old hag has fastened herself to her youth like a limpet to its rock.

CHORUS. *[Missing.]*

CARIO *(opening the door)*. Who knocks at the door? Halloa! I see no one; 'twas then by chance it gave forth that plaintive tone.

HERMES *(to Carlo, who is about to close the door)*. Cario! stop!

CARIO. Eh! friend, was it you who knocked so loudly? Tell me.

HERMES. No, I was going to knock and you forestalled me by opening. Come, call your master quick, then his wife and his children, then his slave and his dog, then thyself and his pig.

CARIO. And what's it all about?

HERMES. It's about this, rascal! Zeus wants to serve you all with the same sauce and hurl the lot of you into the Barathrum.

CARIO. Have a care for your tongue, you bearer of ill tidings! But why does he want to treat us in that scurvy fashion?

HERMES. Because you have committed the most dreadful crime. Since Plutus has recovered his sight, there is nothing for us other gods, neither incense, nor laurels, nor cakes, nor victims, nor anything in the world.

CARIO. And you will never be offered anything more; you governed us too ill.

HERMES. I care nothing at all about the other gods, but ’tis myself. I tell you I am dying of hunger.

CARIO. That’s reasoning like a wise fellow.

HERMES. Formerly, from earliest dawn, I was offered all sorts of good things in the wine-shops, — wine-cakes, honey, dried figs, in short, dishes worthy of Hermes. Now, I lie the livelong day on my back, with my legs in the air, famishing.

CARIO. And quite right too, for you often had them punished who treated you so well.

HERMES. Ah! the lovely cake they used to knead for me on the fourth of the month!

CARIO. You recall it vainly; your regrets are useless! there’ll be no more cake.

HERMES. Ah! the ham I was wont to devour!

CARIO. Well then! make use of your legs and hop on one leg upon the wine-skin, to while away the time.

HERMES. Oh! the grilled entrails I used to swallow down!

CARIO. Your own have got the colic, methinks.

HERMES. Oh! the delicious tipple, half wine, half water!

CARIO. Here, swallow that and be off. *(He discharges a fart.)*

HERMES. Would you do a friend a service?

CARIO. Willingly, if I can.

HERMES. Give me some well-baked bread and a big hunk of the victims they are sacrificing in your house.

CARIO. That would be stealing.

HERMES. Do you forget, then, how I used to take care he knew nothing about it when you were stealing something from your master?

CARIO. Because I used to share it with you, you rogue; some cake or other always came your way.

HERMES. Which afterwards you ate up all by yourself.

CARIO. But then you did not share the blows when I was caught.

HERMES. Forget past injuries, now you have taken Phylé. Ah! how I should like to live with you! Take pity and receive me.

CARIO. You would leave the gods to stop here?

HERMES. One is much better off among you.

CARIO. What! you would desert! Do you think that is honest?

HERMES. “Where I live well, there is my country.”

CARIO. But how could we employ you here?

HERMES. Place me near the door; I am the watchman god and would shift off the robbers.

CARIO. Shift off! Ah! but we have no love for shifts.

HERMES. Entrust me with business dealings.

CARIO. But we are rich; why should we keep a haggling Hermes?

HERMES. Let me intrigue for you.

CARIO. No, no, intrigues are forbidden; we believe in good faith.

HERMES. I will work for you as a guide.

CARIO. But the god sees clearly now, so we no longer want a guide.

HERMES. Well then, I will preside over the games. Ah! what can you object to

in that? Nothing is fitter for Plutus than to give scenic and gymnastic games.

CARIO. How useful ’tis to have so many names! Here you have found the means of earning your bread. I don’t wonder the jurymen so eagerly try to get entered for many tribunals.

HERMES. So then, you admit me on these terms.

CARIO. Go and wash the entrails of the victims at the well, so that you may show yourself serviceable at once.

A PRIEST OF ZEUS. Can anyone direct me where Chremylus is?

CHREMYLUS. What would you with him, friend?

PRIEST. Much ill. Since Plutus has recovered his sight, I am perishing of starvation; I, the priest of Zeus the Deliverer, have nothing to eat!

CHREMYLUS. And what is the cause of that, pray?

PRIEST. No one dreams of offering sacrifices.

CHREMYLUS. Why not?

PRIEST. Because all men are rich. Ah! when they had nothing, the merchant who escaped from shipwreck, the accused who was acquitted, all immolated victims; another would sacrifice for the success of some wish and the priest joined in at the feast; but now there is not the smallest victim, not one of the faithful in the temple, but thousands who come there to ease themselves.

CHREMYLUS. Don’t you take your share of those offerings?

PRIEST. Hence I think I too am going to say good-bye to Zeus the Deliverer, and stop here myself.

CHREMYLUS. Be at ease, all will go well, if it so please the god. Zeus the Deliverer is here; he came of his own accord.

PRIEST. Ha! that’s good news.

CHREMYLUS. Wait a little; we are going to install Plutus presently in the place

he formerly occupied behind the Temple of Athené; there he will watch over our treasures for ever. But let lighted torches be brought; take these and walk in solemn procession in front of the god.

PRIEST. That's magnificent!

CHREMYLUS. Let Plutus be summoned.

OLD WOMAN. And I, what am I to do?

CHREMYLUS. Take the pots of vegetables which we are going to offer to the god in honour of his installation and carry them on your head; you just happen luckily to be wearing a beautiful embroidered robe.

OLD WOMAN. And what about the object of my coming?

CHREMYLUS. Everything shall be according to your wish. The young man will be with you this evening.

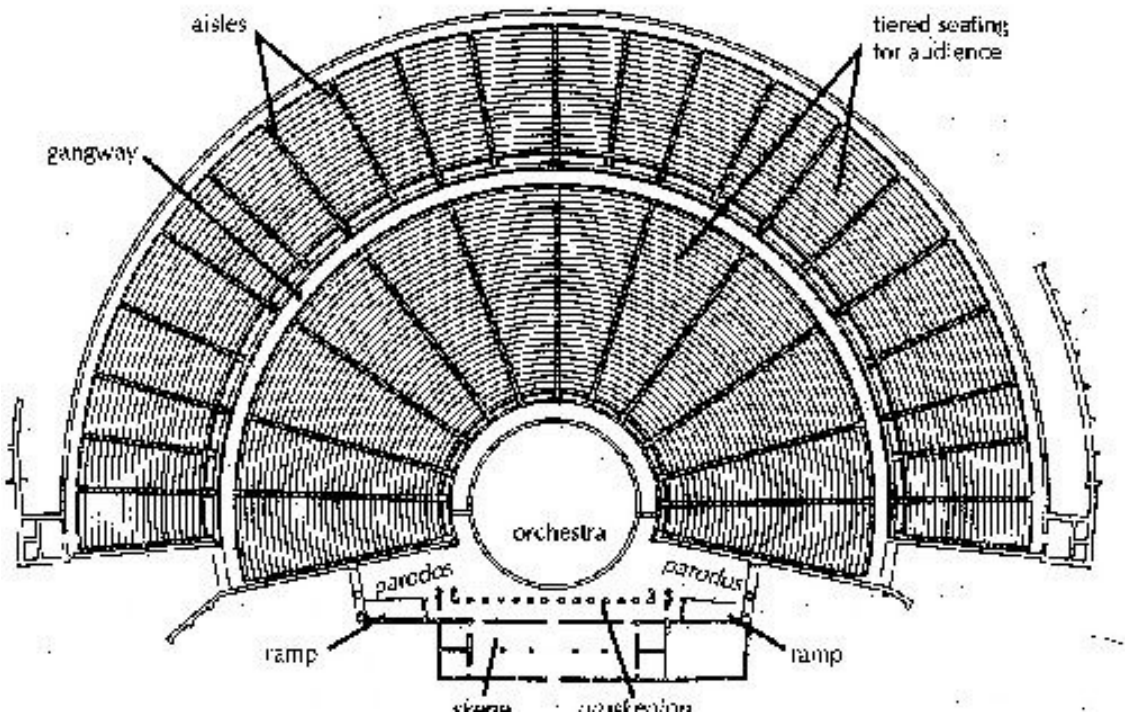
OLD WOMAN. Oh! if you promise me his visit, I will right willingly carry the pots.

CHREMYLUS. Those are strange pots indeed! Generally the scum rises to the top of the pots, but here the pots are raised to the top of the old woman.

CHORUS. Let us withdraw without more tarrying, and follow the others, singing as we go.

The Greek Texts

The Theatre of Dionysus in Athens, where many of Aristophanes' comedies were first performed



The plan of an ancient theatre

LIST OF GREEK TEXTS

In this section of the eBook, readers can view the original Greek texts of Aristophanes' works. You may wish to Bookmark this page for future reference.

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THE ACHARNIANS

Δικαιόπολις
ὅσα δὴ δέδηγμαι τὴν ἐμαυτοῦ καρδίαν,
ἥσθην δὲ βαιά, πάνυ δὲ βαιά, τέτταρα·
ἃ δ᾽ ὠδυνήθην, ψαμμακοσιογάργαρα.
φέρ᾽ ἴδω, τί δ᾽ ἥσθην ἄξιον χαιρηδόνος;
ἐγῷδ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ᾧ γε τὸ κέαρ ηὐφράνθην ἰδών,
τοῖς πέντε ταλάντοις οἷς Κλέων ἐξήμεσεν.
ταῦθ᾽ ὡς ἐγανώθην, καὶ φιλῶ τοὺς ἱππέας
διὰ τοῦτο τοὔργον· ἄξιον γὰρ Ἑλλάδι.
ἀλλ᾽ ὠδυνήθην ἕτερον αὖ τραγῳδικόν,
ὅτε δὴ ᾽κεχήνη προσδοκῶν τὸν Αἰσχύλον,
ὁ δ᾽ ἀνεῖπεν, εἴσαγ᾽ ὦ Θέογνι τὸν χορόν.
πῶς τοῦτ᾽ ἔσεισέ μου δοκεῖς τὴν καρδίαν;
ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερον ἥσθην, ἡνίκ᾽ ἐπὶ Μόσχῳ ποτὲ
Δεξίθεος εἰσῆλθ᾽ ᾄσόμενος Βοιώτιον.
τῆτες δ᾽ ἀπέθανον καὶ διεστράφην ἰδών,
ὅτε δὴ παρέκυψε Χαῖρις ἐπὶ τὸν ὄρθιον.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐδεπώποτ᾽ ἐξ ὅτου ᾽γὼ ῥύπτομαι
οὕτως ἐδήχθην ὑπὸ κονίας τὰς ὀφρῦς
ὡς νῦν, ὁπότ᾽ οὔσης κυρίας ἐκκλησίας
ἐωθινῆς ἔρημος ἡ πνὺξ αὐτηί,
οἱ δ᾽ ἐν ἀγορᾷ λαλοῦσι κἄνω καὶ κάτω
τὸ σχοινίον φεύγουσι τὸ μεμιλτωμένον.
οὐδ᾽ οἱ πρυτάνεις ἥκουσιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀωρίαν
ἥκοντες, εἶτα δ᾽ ὠστιοῦνται πῶς δοκεῖς
ἐλθόντες ἀλλήλοισι περὶ πρώτου ξύλου,
ἁθρόοι καταρρέοντες· εἰρήνη δ᾽ ὅπως
ἔσται προτιμῶσ᾽ οὐδέν· ὦ πόλις πόλις.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀεὶ πρώτιστος εἰς ἐκκλησίαν
νοστῶν κάθημαι· κᾆτ᾽ ἐπειδὰν ᾖ μόνος,
στένω κέχηνα σκορδινῶμαι πέρδομαι,
ἀπορῶ γράφω παρατίλλομαι λογίζομαι,
ἀποβλέπων ἐς τὸν ἀγρὸν εἰρήνης ἐρῶν,
στυγῶν μὲν ἄστυ τὸν δ᾽ ἐμὸν δῆμον ποθῶν,
ὃς οὐδεπώποτ᾽ εἶπεν, ἄνθρακας πρίω,

οὐκ ὄξος οὐκ ἔλαιον, οὐδ᾽ ᾗδει “πρίω,”
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς ἔφερε πάντα χὠ πρίων ἀπῆν.
νῦν οὖν ἀτεχνῶς ἥκω παρεσκευασμένος
βοᾶν ὑποκρούειν λοιδορεῖν τοὺς ῥήτορας,
ἐάν τις ἄλλο πλὴν περὶ εἰρήνης λέγῃ.
ἀλλ᾽ οἱ πρυτάνεις γὰρ οὐτοιὶ μεσημβρινοί.
οὐκ ἠγόρευον; τοῦτ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ οὐγὼ ᾽λεγον·
ἐς τὴν προεδρίαν πᾶς ἀνὴρ ὠστίζεται.

Κῆρυξ
πάριτ᾽ ἐς τὸ πρόσθεν,
πάριθ᾽, ὡς ἂν ἐντὸς ἦτε τοῦ καθάρματος.

Ἀμφίθεος
ἤδη τις εἶπε;

Κῆρ. τίς ἀγορεύειν βούλεται; Ἀμφ. ἐγώ.

Κῆρ. τίς ὤν;

Ἀμφ. Ἀμφίθεος.

Κῆρ. οὐκ ἄνθρωπος; Ἀμφ. οὔ,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀθάνατος. ὁ γὰρ Ἀμφίθεος Δήμητρος ἦν
καὶ Τριπτολέμου· τούτου δὲ Κελεὸς γίγνεται·
γαμεῖ δὲ Κελεὸς Φαιναρέτην τήθην ἐμήν,
ἐξ ἧς Λυκῖνος ἐγένε᾽· ἐκ τούτου δ᾽ ἐγὼ
ἀθάνατός εἰμ᾽· ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ἐπέτρεψαν οἱ θεοὶ
σπονδὰς ποιεῖσθαι πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους μόνῳ.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀθάνατος ὢν ὦνδρες ἐφόδι᾽ οὐκ ἔχω·
οὐ γὰρ διδόασιν οἱ πρυτάνεις.

Κῆρ. οἱ τοξόται.

Ἀμφ: ὦ Τριπτόλεμε καὶ Κελεὲ περιόψεσθέ με;

Δικ.:
ὦνδρες πρυτάνεις ἀδικεῖτε τὴν ἐκκλησίαν
τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἀπάγοντες, ὅστις ἡμῖν ἤθελε
σπονδὰς ποιεῖσθαι καὶ κρεμάσαι τὰς ἀσπίδας.

Κῆρ. κάθησο, σῖγα.

Δικ.: μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω ᾽γὼ μὲν οὔ,
ἢν μὴ περὶ εἰρήνης γε πρυτανεύσητέ μοι.

Κῆρ. οἱ πρέσβεις οἱ παρὰ βασιλέως.

Δικ.: ποίου βασιλέως; ἄχθομαι ᾽γὼ πρέσβεσιν
καὶ τοῖς ταῶσι τοῖς τ᾽ ἀλαζονεύμασιν.

Κῆρ. σίγα.

Δικ.: βαβαιάξ. ὦκβάτανα τοῦ σχήματος.

Πρέσβυς
ἐπέμψαθ᾽ ἡμᾶς ὡς βασιλέα τὸν μέγαν
μισθὸν φέροντας δύο δραχμὰς τῆς ἡμέρας
ἐπ᾽ Εὐθυμένους ἄρχοντος.

Δικ.: οἴμοι τῶν δραχμῶν.

Πρ.: καὶ δῆτ᾽ ἐτρυχόμεσθα διὰ Καϋστρίων
πεδίων ὁδοιπλανοῦντες ἐσκηνημένοι,
ἐφ᾽ ἁρμαμαξῶν μαλθακῶς κατακείμενοι,
ἀπολλύμενοι.

Δικ.: σφόδρα γὰρ ἐσῳζόμην ἐγὼ
παρὰ τὴν ἔπαλξιν ἐν φορυτῷ κατακείμενος.

Πρ.: ξενιζόμενοι δὲ πρὸς βίαν ἐπίνομεν
ἐξ ὑαλίνων ἐκπωμάτων καὶ χρυσίδων
ἄκρατον οἶνον ἡδύν.

Δικ.: ὦ Κραναὰ πόλις
ἆρ᾽ αἰσθάνει τὸν κατάγελων τῶν πρέσβεων; Πρ.: οἱ βάρβαροι γὰρ ἄνδρας ἡγοῦνται μόνους
τοὺς πλεῖστα δυναμένους καταφαγεῖν καὶ πιεῖν.

Δικ.: ἡμεῖς δὲ λαικαστάς τε καὶ καταπύγονας.

Πρ.: ἔτει τετάρτῳ δ᾽ ἐς τὰ βασίλει᾽ ἤλθομεν·
ἀλλ᾽ εἰς ἀπόπατον ᾤχετο στρατιὰν λαβών,
κἄχεζεν ὀκτὼ μῆνας ἐπὶ χρυσῶν ὀρῶν.

Δικ.: πόσου δὲ τὸν πρωκτὸν χρόνου ξυνήγαγεν; Πρ.: τῇ πανσελήνῳ· κᾆτ᾽ ἀπῆλθεν οἴκαδε.
εἶτ᾽ ἐξένιζε· παρετίθει δ᾽ ἡμῖν ὅλους
ἐκ κριβάνου βοῦς.

Δικ.: καὶ τίς εἶδε πώποτε
βοῦς κριβανίτας; τῶν ἀλαζονευμάτων.

Πρ.: καὶ ναὶ μὰ Δί᾽ ὄρνιν τριπλάσιον Κλεωνύμου
παρέθηκεν ἡμῖν· ὄνομα δ᾽ ἦν αὐτῷ φέναξ.

Δικ.: ταῦτ᾽ ἄρ ἐφενάκιζες σὺ δύο δραχμὰς φέρων.

Πρ.: καὶ νῦν ἄγοντες ἥκομεν Ψευδαρτάβαν,
τὸν βασιλέως ὀφθαλμόν.

Δικ.: ἐκκόψειέ γε
κόραξ πατάξας, τόν τε σὸν τοῦ πρέσβεως.

Κῆρ. ὁ βασιλέως ὀφθαλμός.

Δικ.: ὦναξ Ἡράκλεις.
πρὸς τῶν θεῶν ἄνθρωπε ναύφαρκτον βλέπεις;
ἢ περὶ ἄκραν κάμπτων νεώσοικον σκοπεῖς;
ἄσκωμ᾽ ἔχεις που περὶ τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν κάτω.

Πρ.: ἄγε δὴ σὺ βασιλεὺς ἅττα σ᾽ ἀπέπεμψεν φράσον
λέξοντ᾽ Ἀθηναίοισιν ὦ Ψευδαρτάβα.

Ψευδαρτάβας
ἰαρταμὰν ἐξάρξαν ἀπισσόνα σάτρα.

Πρ.: ξυνήκαθ᾽ ὃ λέγει; Δικ.: μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω ᾽γὼ μὲν οὔ.

Πρ.: πέμψειν βασιλέα φησὶν ὑμῖν χρυσίον.
λέγε δὴ σὺ μεῖζον καὶ σαφῶς τὸ χρυσίον.

Ψευδαρτάβας
οὐ λῆψι χρῦσο χαυνόπρωκτ᾽ Ἰαοναῦ.

Δικ.: οἴμοι κακοδαίμων ὡς σαφῶς. 105

Πρ.: τί δ᾽ αὖ λέγει; Δικ.: ὅ τι; χαυνοπρώκτους τοὺς Ἰάονας λέγει,
εἰ προσδοκῶσι χρυσίον ἐκ τῶν βαρβάρων.

Πρ.: οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ ἀχάνας ὅδε γε χρυσίου λέγει.

Δικ.: ποίας ἀχάνας; σὺ μὲν ἀλαζὼν εἶ μέγας.
ἀλλ᾽ ἄπιθ᾽· ἐγὼ δὲ βασανιῶ τοῦτον μόνος. 110
ἄγε δὴ σὺ φράσον ἐμοὶ σαφῶς πρὸς τουτονί,
ἵνα μή σε βάψω βάμμα Σαρδιανικόν·
βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας ἡμῖν ἀποπέμψει χρυσίον; (ἀνανεύει.)
ἄλλως ἄρ᾽ ἐξαπατώμεθ᾽ ὑπὸ τῶν πρέσβεων; (ἐπινεύει.)
Ἑλληνικόν γ᾽ ἐπένευσαν ἄνδρες οὐτοιί, 115
κοὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως οὐκ εἰσὶν ἐνθένδ᾽ αὐτόθεν.
καὶ τοῖν μὲν εὐνούχοιν τὸν ἕτερον τουτονὶ
ἐγῷδ᾽ ὅς ἐστι, Κλεισθένης ὁ Σιβυρτίου.
ὦ θερμόβουλον πρωκτὸν ἐξυρημένε,
τοιόνδε γ᾽ ὦ πίθηκε τὸν πώγων᾽ ἔχων
εὐνοῦχος ἡμῖν ἦλθες ἐσκευασμένος; 120
ὁδὶ δὲ τίς ποτ᾽ ἐστίν; οὐ δήπου Στράτων; Κῆρ. σίγα, κάθιζε.
τὸν βασιλέως ὀφθαλμὸν ἡ βουλὴ καλεῖ
ἐς τὸ πρυτανεῖον. 125

Δικ.: ταῦτα δῆτ᾽ οὐχ ἀγχόνη;
κἄπειτ᾽ ἐγὼ δῆτ᾽ ἐνθαδὶ στραγγεύομαι;
τοὺς δὲ ξενίζειν οὐδέποτέ γ᾽ ἴσχει θύρα.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐργάσομαί τι δεινὸν ἔργον καὶ μέγα.
ἀλλ᾽ Ἀμφίθεός μοι ποῦ ᾽στιν; Ἀμφ: οὐτοσὶ πάρα.

Δικ.: ἐμοὶ σὺ ταυτασὶ λαβὼν ὀκτὼ δραχμὰς 130
σπονδὰς ποίησαι πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους μόνῳ
καὶ τοῖσι παιδίοισι καὶ τῇ πλάτιδι·
ὑμεῖς δὲ πρεσβεύεσθε καὶ κεχήνετε.

Κῆρ. προσίτω Θέωρος ὁ παρὰ Σιτάλκους.
Θέωρος

ὁδί.

Δικ.: ἕτερος ἀλαζὼν οὗτος ἐσκηρύττεται.
Θέωρος
χρόνον μὲν οὐκ ἂν ἦμεν ἐν Θρᾴκῃ πολύν — Δικ.: μὰ Δί᾽ οὐκ ἄν, εἰ μισθόν γε μὴ ᾽φερες πολύν.
Θέωρος
εἰ μὴ κατένειψε χιόνι τὴν Θρᾴκην ὅλην
καὶ τοὺς ποταμοὺς ἔπηξ᾽,
ὑπ᾽ αὐτὸν τὸν χρόνον,
ὅτ᾽ ἐνθαδὶ Θέογνις ἠγωνίζετο.
τοῦτον μετὰ Σιτάλκους ἔπινον τὸν χρόνον·
καὶ δῆτα φιλαθήναιος ἦν ὑπερφυῶς,
ὑμῶν τ᾽ ἐραστὴς ἦν ἀληθὴς ὥστε καὶ
ἐν τοῖσι τοίχοις ἔγραφ᾽, Ἀθηναῖοι καλοί.
ὁ δ᾽ υἱός, ὃν Ἀθηναῖον ἐπεποιήμεθα,
ἤρα φαγεῖν ἀλλᾶντας ἐξ Ἀπατουρίων,
καὶ τὸν πατέρ᾽ ἠντεβόλει βοηθεῖν τῇ πάτρᾳ·
ὁ δ᾽ ὤμοσε σπένδων βοηθήσειν ἔχων
στρατιὰν τοσαύτην ὥστ᾽ Ἀθηναίους ἐρεῖν,
ὅσον τὸ χρῆμα παρνόπων προσέρχεται.

Δικ.: κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολοίμην, εἴ τι τούτων πείθομαι
ὧν εἶπας ἐνταυθοῖ σὺ πλὴν τῶν παρνόπων.
Θέωρος
καὶ νῦν ὅπερ μαχιμώτατον Θρᾳκῶν ἔθνος
ἔπεμψεν ὑμῖν.

Δικ.: τοῦτο μέν γ᾽ ἤδη σαφές.

Κῆρ. οἱ Θρᾷκες ἴτε δεῦρ᾽, οὓς Θέωρος ἤγαγεν.

Δικ.: τουτὶ τί ἐστι τὸ κακόν;
Θέωρος
Ὀδομάντων στρατός.

Δικ.: ποίων Ὀδομάντων; εἰπέ μοι τουτὶ τί ἦν;
τίς τῶν Ὀδομάντων τὸ πέος ἀποτεθρίακεν;
Θέωρος

τούτοις ἐάν τις δύο δραχμὰς μισθὸν διδῷ,
καταπελτάσονται τὴν Βοιωτίαν ὅλην.

Δικ.: τοισδὶ δύο δραχμὰς τοῖς ἀπεψωλημένοις;
ὑποστένοι μέντἂν ὁ θρανίτης λεὼς
ὁ σωσίπολις. οἴμοι τάλας ἀπόλλυμαι,
ὑπὸ τῶν Ὀδομάντων τὰ σκόροδα πορθούμενος.
οὐ καταβαλεῖτε τὰ σκόροδ᾽; 165
Θέωρος
ὦ μόχθηρε σὺ
οὐ μὴ πρόσει τούτοισιν ἐσκοροδισμένοις.

Δικ.: ταυτὶ περιείδεθ᾽ οἱ πρυτάνεις πάσχοντά με
ἐν τῇ πατρίδι καὶ ταῦθ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀνδρῶν βαρβάρων;
ἀλλ᾽ ἀπαγορεύω μὴ ποιεῖν ἐκκλησίαν
τοῖς Θρᾳξὶ περὶ μισθοῦ· λέγω δ᾽ ὑμῖν ὅτι 170
διοσημία ᾽στὶ καὶ ῥανὶς βέβληκέ με.

Κῆρ. τοὺς Θρᾷκας ἀπιέναι, παρεῖναι δ᾽ εἰς ἔνην.
οἱ γὰρ πρυτάνεις λύουσι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.

Δικ.: οἴμοι τάλας μυττωτὸν ὅσον ἀπώλεσα.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ Λακεδαίμονος γὰρ Ἀμφίθεος ὁδί. 175
χαῖρ᾽ Ἀμφίθεε.

Ἀμφ: μήπω γε πρίν γ᾽ ἂν στῶ τρέχων·
δεῖ γάρ με φεύγοντ᾽ ἐκφυγεῖν Ἀχαρνέας.

Δικ.: τί δ᾽ ἔστ᾽; Ἀμφ: ἐγὼ μὲν δεῦρό σοι σπονδὰς φέρων
ἔσπευδον· οἱ δ᾽ ὤσφροντο πρεσβῦταί τινες
Ἀχαρνικοί, στιπτοὶ γέροντες πρίνινοι 180
ἀτεράμονες Μαραθωνομάχαι σφενδάμνινοι.
ἔπειτ᾽ ἀνέκραγον πάντες, ὦ μιαρώτατε
σπονδὰς φέρεις τῶν ἀμπέλων τετμημένων;
κἀς τοὺς τρίβωνας ξυνελέγοντο τῶν λίθων·
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἔφευγον· οἱ δ᾽ ἐδίωκον κἀβόων. 185

Δικ.: οἱ δ᾽ οὖν βοώντων· ἀλλὰ τὰς σπονδὰς φέρεις; Ἀμφ: ἔγωγέ φημι, τρία γε ταυτὶ γεύματα.
αὗται μέν εἰσι πεντέτεις. γεῦσαι λαβών.

Δικ.: αἰβοῖ.

Ἀμφ: τί ἔστιν; Δικ.: οὐκ ἀρέσκουσίν μ᾽ ὅτι
ὄζουσι πίττης καὶ παρασκευῆς νεῶν.

Ἀμφ: σὺ δ᾽ ἀλλὰ τασδὶ τὰς δεκέτεις γεῦσαι λαβών.

Δικ.: ὄζουσι χαὖται πρέσβεων ἐς τὰς πόλεις
ὀξύτατον ὥσπερ διατριβῆς τῶν ξυμμάχων.

Ἀμφ: ἀλλ᾽ αὐταιὶ σπονδαὶ τριακοντούτιδες
κατὰ γῆν τε καὶ θάλατταν.

Δικ.: ὦ Διονύσια,
αὖται μὲν ὄζουσ᾽ ἀμβροσίας καὶ νέκταρος
καὶ μὴ ᾽πιτηρεῖν σιτί᾽ ἡμερῶν τριῶν,
κἀν τῷ στόματι λέγουσι, βαῖν᾽ ὅπῃ θέλεις.
ταύτας δέχομαι καὶ σπένδομαι κἀκπίομαι,
χαίρειν κελεύων πολλὰ τοὺς Ἀχαρνέας.
ἐγὼ δὲ πολέμου καὶ κακῶν ἀπαλλαγεὶς
ἄξω τὰ κατ᾽ ἀγροὺς εἰσιὼν Διονύσια.

Ἀμφ: ἐγὼ δὲ φευξοῦμαί γε τοὺς Ἀχαρνέας.

Χορός
τῇδε πᾶς ἔπου δίωκε καὶ τὸν ἄνδρα πυνθάνου
τῶν ὁδοιπόρων ἁπάντων· τῇ πόλει γὰρ ἄξιον
ξυλλαβεῖν τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον. ἀλλά μοι μηνύσατε,
εἴ τις οἶδ᾽ ὅποι τέτραπται γῆς ὁ τὰς σπονδὰς φέρων.
ἐκπέφευγ᾽, οἴχεται φροῦδος. οἵμοι τάλας
τῶν ἐτῶν τῶν ἐμῶν·
οὐκ ἂν ἐπ᾽ ἐμῆς γε νεότητος, ὅτ᾽ ἐγὼ φέρων ἀνθράκων φορτίον
ἠκολούθουν Φαΰλλῳ τρέχων, ὧδε φαύλως ἂν ὁ
σπονδοφόρος οὗτος ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ τότε διωκόμενος
ἐξέφυγεν οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἐλαφρῶς ἂν ἀπεπλίξατο.
νῦν δ᾽ ἐπειδὴ στερρὸν ἤδη τοὐμὸν ἀντικνήμιον,
καὶ παλαιῷ Λακρατείδῃ τὸ σκέλος βαρύνεται,
οἴχεται. διωκτέος δέ· μὴ γὰρ ἐγχάνῃ ποτὲ
μηδέ περ γέροντας ὄντας ἐκφυγὼν Ἀχαρνέας.
ὅστις ὦ Ζεῦ πάτερ καὶ θεοὶ τοῖσιν ἐχθροῖσιν ἐσπείσατο,

οἷσι παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ πόλεμος ἐχθοδοπὸς αὔξεται τῶν ἐμῶν χωρίων·
κοὐκ ἀνήσω πρὶν ἂν σχοῖνος αὐτοῖσιν ἀντεμπαγῶ
ὀξὺς ὀδυνηρὸς ... ἐπίκωπος, ἵνα
μήποτε πατῶσιν ἔτι τὰς ἐμὰς ἀμπέλους.
ἀλλὰ δεῖ ζητεῖν τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ βλέπειν βαλληνάδε
καὶ διώκειν γῆν πρὸ γῆς, ἕως ἂν εὑρεθῇ ποτέ·
ὡς ἐγὼ βάλλων ἐκεῖνον οὐκ ἂν ἐμπλήμην λίθοις.

Δικ.: εὐφημεῖτε, εὐφημεῖτε.

Χορ.: σῖγα πᾶς. ἠκούσατ᾽ ἄνδρες ἆρα τῆς εὐφημίας;
οὗτος αὐτός ἐστιν ὃν ζητοῦμεν. ἀλλὰ δεῦρο πᾶς
ἐκποδών· θύσων γὰρ ἀνὴρ ὡς ἔοικ᾽ ἐξέρχεται.

Δικ.: εὐφημεῖτε, εὐφημεῖτε.
προΐτω σ᾽ τὸ πρόσθεν ὀλίγον ἡ κανηφόρος·
ὁ Ξανθίας τὸν φαλλὸν ὀρθὸν στησάτω.
κατάθου τὸ κανοῦν ὦ θύγατερ, ἵν᾽ ἀπαρξώμεθα.
Θυγάτηρ
ὦ μῆτερ ἀνάδος δεῦρο τὴν ἐτνήρυσιν,
ἵν᾽ ἔτνος καταχέω τοὐλατῆρος τουτουί.

Δικ.: καὶ μὴν καλόν γ᾽ ἔστ᾽· ὦ Διόνυσε δέσποτα
κεχαρισμένως σοι τήνδε τὴν πομπὴν ἐμὲ
πέμψαντα καὶ θύσαντα μετὰ τῶν οἰκετῶν
ἀγαγεῖν τυχηρῶς τὰ κατ᾽ ἀγροὺς Διονύσια,
στρατιᾶς ἀπαλλαχθέντα· τὰς σπονδὰς δέ μοι
καλῶς ξυνενεγκεῖν τὰς τριακοντούτιδας.
ἄγ᾽ ὦ θύγατερ ὅπως τὸ κανοῦν καλὴ καλῶς
οἴσεις βλέπουσα θυμβροφάγον. ὡς μακάριος
ὅστις σ᾽ ὀπύσει κἀκποιήσεται γαλᾶς
σοῦ μηδὲν ἥττους βδεῖν, ἐπειδὰν ὄρθρος ᾖ.
πρόβαινε, κἀν τῷχλῳ φυλάττεσθαι σφόδρα
μή τις λαθών σου περιτράγῃ τὰ χρυσία.
ὦ Ξανθία, σφῷν δ᾽ ἐστὶν ὀρθὸς ἑκτέος
ὁ φαλλὸς ἐξόπισθε τῆς κανηφόρου·
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀκολουθῶν ᾄσομαι τὸ φαλλικόν·
σὺ δ᾽ ὦ γύναι θεῶ μ᾽ ἀπὸ τοῦ τέγους. πρόβα.

Φαλῆς ἑταῖρε Βακχίου
ξύγκωμε νυκτοπεριπλάνητε
μοιχὲ παιδεραστά,
ἕκτῳ σ᾽ ἔτει προσεῖπον ἐς
τὸν δῆμον ἐλθὼν ἄσμενος,
σπονδὰς ποιησάμενος ἐμαυτῷ,
πραγμάτων τε καὶ μαχῶν
καὶ Λαμάχων ἀπαλλαγείς.
πολλῷ γάρ ἐσθ᾽ ἥδιον, ὦ Φαλῆς Φαλῆς,
κλέπτουσαν εὐρόνθ᾽ ὡρικὴν ὑληφόρον
τὴν Στρυμοδώρου Θρᾷτταν ἐκ τοῦ Φελλέως
μέσην λαβόντ᾽ ἄραντα καταβαλόντα
καταγιγαρτίσ᾽ ὦ
Φαλῆς Φαλῆς.
ἐὰν μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν ξυμπίῃς, ἐκ κραιπάλης
ἕωθεν εἰρήνης ῥοφήσει τρύβλιον·

Χορ.: οὗτος αὐτός ἐστιν, οὗτος.
βάλλε βάλλε βάλλε βάλλε,
παῖε παῖε τὸν μιαρόν.
οὐ βαλεῖς; οὐ βαλεῖς; Δικ.: Ἡράκλεις τουτὶ τί ἐστι; τὴν χύτραν συντρίψετε.

Χορ.: σὲ μὲν οὖν καταλεύσομεν ὦ μιαρὰ κεφαλή.

Δικ.: ἀντὶ ποίας αἰτίας ὦχαρνέων γεραίτατοι; Χορ.: τοῦτ᾽ ἐρωτᾷς; ἀναίσχυντος εἶ καὶ βδελυρὸς
ὦ προδότα τῆς πατρίδος, ὅστις ἡμῶν μόνος
σπεισάμενος εἶτα δύνασαι πρὸς ἔμ᾽ ἀποβλέπειν.

Δικ.: ἀντὶ δ᾽ ὧν ἐσπεισάμην οὐκ ἴστε. μάλλα᾽ ἀκούσατε.

Χορ.: σοῦ γ᾽ ἀκούσωμεν; ἀπολεῖ· κατά σε χώσομεν τοῖς λίθοις.

Δικ.: μηδαμῶς πρὶν ἄν γ᾽ ἀκούσητ᾽· ἀλλ᾽ ἀνάσχεσθ᾽ ὦγαθοί.

Χορ.: οὐκ ἀνασχήσομαι· μηδὲ λέγε μοι σὺ λόγον·
ὡς μεμίσηκά σε Κλέωνος ἔτι μᾶλλον, ὃν ἐγὼ
κατατεμῶ ποθ᾽ ἱππεῦσι καττύματα.
σοῦ δ᾽ ἐγὼ λόγους λέγοντος οὐκ ἀκούσομαι μακρούς,
ὅστις ἐσπείσω Λάκωσιν, ἀλλὰ τιμωρήσομαι.

Δικ.: ὦγαθοὶ τοὺς μὲν Λάκωνας ἐκποδὼν ἐάσατε,
τῶν δ᾽ ἐμῶν σπονδῶν ἀκούσατ᾽, εἰ καλῶς ἐσπεισάμην.

Χορ.: πῶς δέ γ᾽ ἂν καλῶς λέγοις ἄν, εἴπερ ἐσπείσω γ᾽ ἅπαξ
οἷσιν οὔτε βωμὸς οὔτε πίστις οὔθ᾽ ὅρκος μένει; Δικ.: οἶδ᾽ ἐγὼ καὶ τοὺς Λάκωνας, οἷς ἄγαν ἐγκείμεθα,
οὐχ ἁπάντων ὄντας ἡμῖν αἰτίους τῶν πραγμάτων.

Χορ.: οὐχ ἁπάντων ὦ πανοῦργε; ταῦτα δὴ τολμᾷς λέγειν
ἐμφανῶς ἤδη πρὸς ἡμᾶς; εἶτ᾽ ἐγώ σου φείσομαι; Δικ.: οὐχ ἁπάντων, οὐχ ἁπάντων· ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ λέγων ὀδὶ
πόλλ᾽ ἂν ἀποφήναιμ᾽ ἐκείνους ἔσθ᾽ ἃ κἀδικουμένους.

Χορ.: τοῦτο τοὔπος δεινὸν ἤδη καὶ ταραξικάρδιον,
εἰ σὺ τολμήσεις ὑπὲρ τῶν πολεμίων ἡμῖν λέγειν.

Δικ.: κἄν γε μὴ λέγω δίκαια μηδὲ τῷ πλήθει δοκῶ,
ὑπὲρ ἐπιξήνου ᾽θελήσω τὴν κεφαλὴν ἔχων λέγειν.

Χορ.: εἰπέ μοι τί φειδόμεσθα τῶν λίθων ὦ δημόται
μὴ οὐ καταξαίνειν τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον ἐς φοινικίδα;

Δικ.: οἷον αὖ μέλας τις ὑμῖν θυμάλωψ ἐπέζεσεν.
οὐκ ἀκούσεσθ᾽; οὐκ ἀκούσεσθ᾽ ἐτεὸν ὦχαρνηίδαι; Χορ.: οὐκ ἀκουσόμεσθα δῆτα.

Δικ.: δεινά τἄρα πείσομαι.

Χορ.: ἐξολοίμην, ἢν ἀκούσω.

Δικ.: μηδαμῶς ὦχαρνικοί.

Χορ.: ὡς τεθνήξων ἴσθι νυνί.

Δικ.: δήξομἄρ᾽ ὑμᾶς ἐγώ.
ἀνταποκτενῶ γὰρ ὑμῶν τῶν φίλων τοὺς φιλτάτους·
ὡς ἔχω γ᾽ ὑμῶν ὀμήρους, οὓς ἀποσφάξω λαβών.

Χορ.: εἰπέ μοι, τί τοῦτ᾽ ἀπειλεῖ τοὔπος ἄνδρες δημόται
τοῖς Ἀχαρνικοῖσιν ἡμῖν; μῶν ἔχει του παιδίον

τῶν παρόντων ἔνδον εἶρξας; ἢ ᾽πὶ τῷ θρασύνεται;

Δικ.: βάλλετ᾽ εἰ βούλεσθ᾽. ἐγὼ γὰρ τουτονὶ διαφθερῶ.
εἴσομαι δ᾽ ὑμῶν τάχ᾽ ὅστις ἀνθράκων τι κήδεται.

Χορ.: ὡς ἀπωλόμεσθ᾽. ὁ λάρκος δημότης ὅδ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐμός.
ἀλλὰ μὴ δράσῃς ὃ μέλλεις· μηδαμῶς ὦ μηδαμῶς.

Δικ.: ὡς ἀποκτενῶ, κέκραχθ᾽· ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐκ ἀκούσομαι.

Χορ.: ἀπολεῖς ἄρ᾽ ὁμήλικα τόνδε φιλανθρακέα; Δικ.: οὐδ᾽ ἐμοῦ λέγοντος ὑμεῖς ἀρτίως ἠκούσατε.

Χορ.: ἀλλὰ γὰρ νῦν λέγ᾽, εἴ σοι δοκεῖ, τόν τε Λακεδαιμόνιον
αὐτὸν ὅτι τῷ τρόπῳ σοὐστὶ φίλος·
ὡς τόδε τὸ λαρκίδιον οὐ προδώσω ποτέ.

Δικ.: τοὺς λίθους νύν μοι χαμᾶζε πρῶτον ἐξεράσατε.

Χορ.: οὑτοιί σοι χαμαί, καὶ σὺ κατάθου πάλιν τὸ ξίφος.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ ὅπως μὴ ν᾽ τοῖς τρίβωσιν ἐγκάθηνταί που λίθοι.

Χορ.: ἐκσέσεισται χαμᾶζ᾽· οὐχ ὁρᾷς σειόμενον;
ἀλλὰ μή μοι πρόφασιν, ἀλλὰ κατάθου τὸ βέλος.
ὡς ὅδε γε σειστὸς ἅμα τῇ στροφῇ γίγνεται.

Δικ.: ἐμέλλετ᾽ ἄρα πάντως ἀνήσειν τῆς βοῆς,
ὀλίγου τ᾽ ἀπέθανον ἄνθρακες Παρνήθιοι,
καὶ ταῦτα διὰ τὴν ἀτοπίαν τῶν δημοτῶν.
ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους δὲ τῆς μαρίλης μοι συχνὴν
ὁ λάρκος ἐνετίλησεν ὥσπερ σηπία.
δεινὸν γὰρ οὕτως ὀμφακίαν πεφυκέναι
τὸν θυμὸν ἀνδρῶν ὥστε βάλλειν καὶ βοᾶν
ἐθέλειν τ᾽ ἀκοῦσαι μηδὲν ἴσον ἴσῳ φέρον,
ἐμοῦ ᾽θέλοντος ὑπὲρ ἐπιξήνου λέγειν
ὑπὲρ Λακεδαιμονίων ἅπανθ᾽ ὅσ᾽ ἂν λέγω·
καίτοι φιλῶ γε τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν ἐγώ.

Χορ.: τί οὖν οὐ λέγεις, ἐπίξηνον ἐξενεγκὼν θύραζ᾽,

ὅ τι ποτ᾽ ὦ σχέτλιε τὸ μέγα τοῦτ᾽ ἔχεις;
πάνυ γὰρ ἔμεγε πόθος ὅ τι φρονεῖς ἔχει.
ἀλλ᾽ ἦπερ αὐτὸς τὴν δίκην διωρίσω,
θεὶς δεῦρο τοὐπίξηνον ἐγχείρει λέγειν.

Δικ.: ἰδοὺ θεᾶσθε, τὸ μὲν ἐπίξηνον τοδί,
ὁ δ᾽ ἀνὴρ ὁ λέξων οὑτοσὶ τυννουτοσί.
ἀμέλει μὰ τὸν Δῖ οὐκ ἐνασπιδώσομαι,
λέξω δ᾽ ὑπὲρ Λακεδαιμονίων ἅ μοι δοκεῖ.
καίτοι δέδοικα πολλά· τούς τε γὰρ τρόπους
τοὺς τῶν ἀγροίκων οἶδα χαίροντας σφόδρα,
ἐάν τις αὐτοὺς εὐλογῇ καὶ τὴν πόλιν
ἀνὴρ ἀλαζὼν καὶ δίκαια κἄδικα·
κἀνταῦθα λανθάνουσ᾽ ἀπεμπολώμενοι·
τῶν τ᾽ αὖ γερόντων οἶδα τὰς ψυχὰς ὅτι
οὐδὲν βλέπουσιν ἄλλο πλὴν ψηφηδακεῖν.
αὐτός τ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν ὑπὸ Κλέωνος ἄπαθον
ἐπίσταμαι διὰ τὴν πέρυσι κωμῳδίαν.
εἰσελκύσας γάρ μ᾽ ἐς τὸ βουλευτήριον
διέβαλλε καὶ ψευδῆ κατεγλώττιζέ μου
κἀκυκλοβόρει κἄπλυνεν, ὥστ᾽ ὀλίγου πάνυ
ἀπωλόμην μολυνοπραγμονούμενος.
νῦν οὖν με πρῶτον πρὶν λέγειν ἐάσατε
ἐνσκευάσασθαί μ᾽ οἷον ἀθλιώτατον.

Χορ.: τί ταῦτα στρέφει τεχνάζεις τε καὶ πορίζεις τριβάς;
λαβὲ δ᾽ ἐμοῦ γ᾽ ἕνεκα παρ᾽ Ἱερωνύμου
σκοτοδασυπυκνότριχά τιν᾽ Ἄιδος κυνῆν·
ἀλλ᾽ ἐξάνοιγε μηχανὰς τὰς Σισύφου,
ὡς σκῆψιν ἀγὼν οὗτος οὐκ ἐσδέξεται.

Δικ.: ὥρα ᾽στὶν ἤδη καρτερὰν ψυχὴν λαβεῖν,
καί μοι βαδιστέ᾽ ἐστὶν ὡς Εὐριπίδην.
παῖ παῖ.
Κηφισόφων
τίς οὗτος, Δικ.: ἔνδον ἔστ᾽ Εὐριπίδης; Κηφ.: οὐκ ἔνδον ἔνδον ἐστίν, εἰ γνώμην ἔχεις.

Δικ.: πῶς ἔνδον εἶτ᾽ οὐκ ἔνδον; Κηφ.: ὀρθῶς ὦ γέρον.

ὁ νοῦς μὲν ἔξω ξυλλέγων ἐπύλλια
οὐκ ἔνδον, αὐτὸς δ᾽ ἔνδον ἀναβάδην ποιεῖ
τραγῳδίαν.

Δικ.: ὦ τρισμακάρι᾽ Εὐριπίδη,
ὅθ᾽ ὁ δοῦλος οὐτωσὶ σαφῶς ἀπεκρίνατο.
ἐκκάλεσον αὐτόν.

Κηφ.: ἀλλ᾽ ἀδύνατον.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως·
οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἀπέλθοιμ᾽, ἀλλὰ κόψω τὴν θύραν.
Εὐριπίδη, Εὐριπίδιον,
ὑπάκουσον, εἴπερ τώποτ᾽ ἀνθρώπων τινί·
Δικαιόπολις καλεῖ σε Χολλῄδης, ἐγώ.
Ευριπίδης
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ σχολή.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ ἐκκυκλήθητ᾽.
Ευριπίδης
ἀλλ᾽ ἀδύνατον.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως.
Ευριπίδης
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκκυκλήσομαι· καταβαίνειν δ᾽ οὐ σχολή.

Δικ.: Εὐριπίδη,
Ευριπίδης
τί λέλακας; Δικ.: ἀναβάδην ποιεῖς,
ἐξὸν καταβάδην; οὐκ ἐτὸς χωλοὺς ποιεῖς.
ἀτὰρ τί τὰ ῥάκι᾽ ἐκ τραγῳδίας ἔχεις,
ἐσθῆτ᾽ ἐλεινήν; οὐκ ἐτὸς πτωχοὺς ποιεῖς.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀντιβολῶ πρὸς τῶν γονάτων σ᾽ Εὐριπίδη,
δός μοι ῥάκιόν τι τοῦ παλαιοῦ δράματος.
δεῖ γάρ με λέξαι τῷ χορῷ ῥῆσιν μακράν·
αὕτη δὲ θάνατον, ἢν κακῶς λέξω, φέρει.
Ευριπίδης
τὰ ποῖα τρύχη; μῶν ἐν οἷς Οἰνεὺς ὁδὶ
ὁ δύσποτμος γεραιὸς ἠγωνίζετο; Δικ.: οὐκ Οἰνέως ἦν, ἀλλ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἀθλιωτέρου.

Ευριπίδης
τὰ τοῦ τυφλοῦ Φοίνικος; Δικ.: οὐ Φοίνικος, οὔ·
ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερος ἦν Φοίνικος ἀθλιώτερος.
Ευριπίδης
ποίας ποθ᾽ ἁνὴρ λακίδας αἰτεῖται πέπλων;
ἀλλ᾽ ἦ Φιλοκτήτου τὰ τοῦ πτωχοῦ λέγεις; Δικ.: οὐκ ἀλλὰ τούτου πολὺ πολὺ πτωχιστέρου.
Ευριπίδης
ἀλλ᾽ ἦ τὰ δυσπινῆ ᾽θέλεις πεπλώματα,
ἃ Βελλεροφόντης εἶχ᾽ ὁ χωλὸς οὑτοσί; Δικ.: οὐ Βελλεροφόντης· ἀλλὰ κἀκεῖνος μὲν ἦν
χωλὸς προσαιτῶν στωμύλος δεινὸς λέγειν.
Ευριπίδης
οἶδ᾽ ἄνδρα Μυσὸν Τήλεφον.

Δικ.: ναὶ Τήλεφον·
τούτου δὸς ἀντιβολῶ σέ μοι τὰ σπάργανα.
Ευριπίδης
ὦ παῖ δὸς αὐτῷ Τηλέφου ῥακώματα.
κεῖται δ᾽ ἄνωθεν τῶν Θυεστείων ῥακῶν
μεταξὺ τῶν Ἰνοῦς.

Κηφ.: ἰδοὺ ταυτὶ λαβέ.

Δικ.: ὦ Ζεῦ διόπτα καὶ κατόπτα πανταχῇ,
ἐνσκευάσασθαί μ᾽ οἷον ἀθλιώτατον.
Εὐριπίδη, ᾽πειδήπερ ἐχαρίσω ταδί,
κἀκεῖνά μοι δὸς τἀκόλουθα τῶν ῥακῶν,
τὸ πιλίδιον περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τὸ Μύσιον.
δεῖ γάρ με δόξαι πτωχὸν εἶναι τήμερον,
εἶναι μὲν ὅσπερ εἰμί, φαίνεσθαι δὲ μή·
τοὺς μὲν θεατὰς εἰδέναι μ᾽ ὃς εἶμ᾽ ἐγώ,
τοὺς δ᾽ αὖ χορευτὰς ἠλιθίους παρεστάναι,
ὅπως ἂν αὐτοὺς ῥηματίοις σκιμαλίσω.
Ευριπίδης
δώσω· πυκνῇ γὰρ λεπτὰ μηχανᾷ φρενί.

Δικ.: εὐδαιμονοίης, Τηλέφῳ δ᾽ ἀγὼ φρονῶ.

εὖ γ᾽ οἷον ἤδη ῥηματίων ἐμπίμπλαμαι.
ἀτὰρ δέομαί γε πτωχικοῦ βακτηρίου.
Ευριπίδης
τουτὶ λαβὼν ἄπελθε λαΐνων σταθμῶν.

Δικ.: ὦ θύμ᾽, ὁρᾷς γὰρ ὡς ἀπωθοῦμαι δόμων,
πολλῶν δεόμενος σκευαρίων· νῦν δὴ γενοῦ
γλίσχρος προσαιτῶν λιπαρῶν τ᾽. Εὐριπίδη
δός μοι σπυρίδιον διακεκαυμένον λύχνῳ.
Ευριπίδης
τί δ᾽ ὦ τάλας σε τοῦδ᾽ ἔχει πλέκους χρέος; Δικ.: χρέος μὲν οὐδέν, βούλομαι δ᾽ ὅμως λαβεῖν.
Ευριπίδης
λυπηρὸς ἴσθ᾽ ὢν κἀποχώρησον δόμων.

Δικ.: φεῦ·
εὐδαιμονοίης, ὥσπερ ἡ μήτηρ ποτέ.
Ευριπίδης
ἄπελθε νῦν μοι.

Δικ.: μἀλλά μοι δὸς ἓν μόνον
κοτυλίσκιον τὸ χεῖλος ἀποκεκρουσμένον.
Ευριπίδης
φθείρου λαβὼν τόδ᾽· ἴσθ᾽ ὀχληρὸς ὢν δόμοις.

Δικ.: οὔπω μὰ Δί᾽· οἶσθ᾽ οἷ᾽ αὐτὸς ἐργάζει κακά.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ γλυκύτατ᾽ Εὐριπίδη τουτὶ μόνον
δός μοι χυτρίδιον σφογγίῳ βεβυσμένον.
Ευριπίδης
ὦνθρωπ᾽ ἀφαιρήσει με τὴν τραγῳδίαν·
ἄπελθε ταυτηνὶ λαβών.

Δικ.: ἀπέρχομαι.
καίτοι τί δράσω; δεῖ γὰρ ἑνὸς οὗ μὴ τυχὼν
ἀπόλωλ᾽. ἄκουσον ὦ γλυκύτατ᾽ Εὐριπίδη·
τουτὶ λαβὼν ἄπειμι κοὐ πρόσειμ᾽ ἔτι·
ἐς τὸ σπυρίδιον ἰσχνά μοι φυλλεῖα δός.
Ευριπίδης
ἀπολεῖς μ᾽. ἰδού σοι. φροῦδά μοι τὰ δράματα.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἄπειμι. καὶ γάρ εἰμ᾽ ἄγαν
ὀχληρός, οὐ δοκῶν με κοιράνους στυγεῖν.
οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ὡς ἀπόλωλ᾽. ἐπελαθόμην
ἐν ᾧπέρ ἐστι πάντα μοι τὰ πράγματα.
Εὐριπίδιον ὦ φιλτάτιον καὶ γλυκύτατον,
κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολοίμην, εἴ τί σ᾽ αἰτήσαιμ᾽ ἔτι,
πλὴν ἓν μόνον, τουτὶ μόνον τουτὶ μόνον,
σκάνδικά μοι δὸς μητρόθεν δεδεγμένος.
Ευριπίδης
ἀνὴρ ὑβρίζει· κλῇε πηκτὰ δωμάτων.

Δικ.: ὦ θύμ᾽ ἄνευ σκάνδικος ἐμπορευτέα.
ἆρ᾽ οἶσθ᾽ ὅσον τὸν ἀγῶν᾽ ἀγωνιεῖ τάχα,
μέλλων ὑπὲρ Λακεδαιμονίων ἀνδρῶν λέγειν;
πρόβαινέ νυν ὦ θυμέ· γραμμὴ δ᾽ αὐτηί.
ἕστηκας; οὐκ εἶ καταπιὼν Εὐριπίδην;
ἐπῄνεσ᾽· ἄγε νυν ὦ τάλαινα καρδία
ἄπελθ᾽ ἐκεῖσε, κᾆτα τὴν κεφαλὴν ἐκεῖ
παράσχες εἰποῦσ᾽ ἅττ᾽ ἂν αὐτῇ σοι δοκῇ.
τόλμησον ἴθι χώρησον, ἄγαμαι καρδίας.

Χορ.: τί δράσεις; τί φήσεις; εὖ ἴσθι νυν
ἀναίσχυντος ὢν σιδηροῦς τ᾽ ἀνήρ,
ὅστις παρασχὼν τῇ πόλει τὸν αὐχένα
ἅπασι μέλλεις εἶς λέγειν τἀναντία.
ἀνὴρ οὐ τρέμει τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽. εἶά νυν,
ἐπειδήπερ αὐτὸς αἱρεῖ, λέγε.

Δικ.: μή μοι φθονήσητ᾽ ἄνδρες οἱ θεώμενοι,
εἰ πτωχὸς ὢν ἔπειτ᾽ ἐν Ἀθηναίοις λέγειν
μέλλω περὶ τῆς πόλεως, τρυγῳδίαν ποιῶν.
τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον οἶδε καὶ τρυγῳδία.
ἐγὼ δὲ λέξω δεινὰ μὲν δίκαια δέ.
οὐ γάρ με νῦν γε διαβαλεῖ Κλέων ὅτι
ξένων παρόντων τὴν πόλιν κακῶς λέγω.
αὐτοὶ γάρ ἐσμεν οὐπὶ Ληναίῳ τ᾽ ἀγών,
κοὔπω ξένοι πάρεισιν· οὔτε γὰρ φόροι
ἥκουσιν οὔτ᾽ ἐκ τῶν πόλεων οἱ ξύμμαχοι·
ἀλλ᾽ ἐσμὲν αὐτοὶ νῦν γε περιεπτισμένοι·

τοὺς γὰρ μετοίκους ἄχυρα τῶν ἀστῶν λέγω.
ἐγὼ δὲ μισῶ μὲν Λακεδαιμονίους σφόδρα,
καὐτοῖς ὁ Ποσειδῶν οὐπὶ Ταινάρῳ θεὸς
σείσας ἅπασιν ἐμβάλοι τὰς οἰκίας·
κἀμοὶ γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἀμπέλια διακεκομμένα.
ἀτὰρ φίλοι γὰρ οἱ παρόντες ἐν λόγῳ,
τί ταῦτα τοὺς Λάκωνας αἰτιώμεθα;
ἡμῶν γὰρ ἄνδρες, κοὐχὶ τὴν πόλιν λέγω,
μέμνησθε τοῦθ᾽ ὅτι οὐχὶ τὴν πόλιν λέγω,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀνδράρια μοχθηρά, παρακεκομμένα,
ἄτιμα καὶ παράσημα καὶ παράξενα,
ἐσυκοφάντει Μεγαρέων τὰ χλανίσκια·
κεἴ που σίκυον ἴδοιεν ἢ λαγῳδιον
ἢ χοιρίδιον ἢ σκόροδον ἢ χόνδρους ἅλας,
ταῦτ᾽ ἦν Μεγαρικὰ κἀπέπρατ᾽ αὐθημερόν.
καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ σμικρὰ κἀπιχώρια,
πόρνην δὲ Σιμαίθαν ἰόντες Μεγαράδε
νεανίαι κλέπτουσι μεθυσοκότταβοι·
κᾆθ᾽ οἱ Μεγαρῆς ὀδύναις πεφυσιγγωμένοι
ἀντεξέκλεψαν Ἀσπασίας πόρνα δύο·
κἀντεῦθεν ἀρχὴ τοῦ πολέμου κατερράγη
Ἕλλησι πᾶσιν ἐκ τριῶν λαικαστριῶν.
ἐντεῦθεν ὀργῇ Περικλέης οὐλύμπιος
ἤστραπτ᾽ ἐβρόντα ξυνεκύκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα,
ἐτίθει νόμους ὥσπερ σκόλια γεγραμμένους,
ὡς χρὴ Μεγαρέας μήτε γῇ μήτ᾽ ἐν ἀγορᾷ
μήτ᾽ ἐν θαλάττῃ μήτ᾽ ἐν οὐρανῷ μένειν.
ἐντεῦθεν οἱ Μεγαρῆς, ὅτε δὴ ᾽πείνων βάδην,
Λακεδαιμονίων ἐδέοντο τὸ ψήφισμ᾽ ὅπως
μεταστραφείη τὸ διὰ τὰς λαικαστρίας·
κοὐκ ἠθέλομεν ἡμεῖς δεομένων πολλάκις.
κἀντεῦθεν ἤδη πάταγος ἦν τῶν ἀσπίδων.
ἐρεῖ τις, οὐ χρῆν· ἀλλὰ τί ἐχρῆν, εἴπατε.

Δικ.: φέρ᾽ εἰ Λακεδαιμονίων τις ἐκπλεύσας σκάφει
ἀπέδοτο φήνας κυνίδιον Σεριφίων,
καθῆσθ᾽ ἂν ἐν δόμοισιν; ἦ πολλοῦ γε δεῖ·
καὶ κάρτα μέντἂν εὐθέως καθείλκετε
τριακοσίας ναῦς, ἦν δ᾽ ἂν ἡ πόλις πλέα

θορύβου στρατιωτῶν, περὶ τριηράρχου βοῆς,
μισθοῦ διδομένου, παλλαδίων χρυσουμένων,
στοᾶς στεναχούσης, σιτίων μετρουμένων,
ἀσκῶν, τροπωτήρων, κάδους ὠνουμένων,
σκορόδων, ἐλαῶν, κρομμύων ἐν δικτύοις,
στεφάνων, τριχίδων, αὐλητρίδων, ὑπωπίων·
τὸ νεώριον δ᾽ αὖ κωπέων πλατουμένων,
τύλων ψοφούντων, θαλαμιῶν τροπουμένων,
αὐλῶν, κελευστῶν, νιγλάρων, συριγμάτων.
ταῦτ᾽ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι ἂν ἐδρᾶτε· τὸν δὲ Τήλεφον
οὐκ οἰόμεσθα; νοῦς ἄρ᾽ ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔνι.
Ἡμιχόριον Α
ἄληθες ὦπίτριπτε καί μιαρώτατε;
ταυτὶ σὺ τολμᾷς πτωχὸς ὢν ἡμᾶς λέγειν,
καὶ συκοφάντης εἴ τις ἦν ὠνείδισας;
Ἡμιχόριον Β
νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ καὶ λέγει γ᾽ ἅπερ λέγει
δίκαια πάντα κοὐδὲν αὐτῶν ψεύδεται.
Ἡμιχόριον Α
εἶτ᾽ εἰ δίκαια, τοῦτον εἰπεῖν αὖτ᾽ ἐχρῆν;
ἀλλ᾽ οὔτι χαίρων ταῦτα τολμήσει λέγειν.
Ἡμιχόριον Β
οὗτος σὺ ποῖ θεῖς; οὐ μενεῖς; ὡς εἰ θενεῖς
τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον, αὐτὸς ἀρθήσει τάχα.
Ἡμιχόριον Α
ἰὼ Λάμαχ᾽ ὦ βλέπων ἀστραπάς,
βοήθησον ὦ γοργολόφα φανείς,
ἰὼ Λάμαχ᾽ ὦ φίλ᾽ ὦ φυλέτα·
εἴτε τις ἔστι ταξίαρχος ἢ στρατηγὸς ἢ
τειχομάχας ἀνήρ, βοηθησάτω
τις ἀνύσας. ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔχομαι μέσος.
Λάμαχος
πόθεν βοῆς ἤκουσα πολεμιστηρίας;
ποῖ χρὴ βοηθεῖν; ποῖ κυδοιμὸν ἐμβαλεῖν;
τίς Γοργόν᾽ ἐξήγειρεν ἐκ τοῦ σάγματος; Δικ.: ὦ Λάμαχ᾽ ἥρως, τῶν λόφων καὶ
τῶν λόχων.
Ἡμιχόριον Α
ὦ Λάμαχ᾽, οὐ γὰρ οὗτος ἄνθρωπος πάλαι
ἅπασαν ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν κακορροθεῖ; Λάμ.: οὗτος σὺ τολμᾷς πτωχὸς ὢν λέγειν

τάδε; Δικ.: ὦ Λάμαχ᾽ ἥρως, ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην ἔχε,
εἰ πτωχὸς ὢν εἶπόν τι κἀστωμυλάμην.

Λάμ.: τί δ᾽ εἶπας ἡμᾶς; οὐκ ἐρεῖς; Δικ.: οὐκ οἶδά πω·
ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους γὰρ τῶν ὅπλων εἰλιγγιῶ.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀντιβολῶ σ᾽ ἀπένεγκέ μου τὴν μορμόνα.

Λάμ.: ἰδού.

Δικ.: παράθες νυν ὑπτίαν αὐτὴν ἐμοί.

Λάμ.: κεῖται.

Δικ.: φέρε νυν ἀπὸ τοῦ κράνους μοι τὸ πτερόν.

Λάμ.: τουτὶ πτίλον σοι.

Δικ.: τῆς κεφαλῆς νύν μου λαβοῦ,
ἵν᾽ ἐξεμέσω· βδελύττομαι γὰρ τοὺς λόφους.

Λάμ.: οὗτος τί δράσεις; τῷ πτίλῳ μέλλεις ἐμεῖν;
πτίλον γάρ ἐστιν — Δικ.: εἰπέ μοι τίνος ποτὲ
ὄρνιθός ἐστιν; ἆρα κομπολακύθου; Λάμ.: οἴμ᾽ ὡς τεθνήξεις.

Δικ.: μηδαμῶς ὦ Λάμαχε·
οὐ γὰρ κατ᾽ ἰσχύν ἐστιν· εἰ δ᾽ ἰσχυρὸς εἶ,
τί μ᾽ οὐκ ἀπεψώλησας; εὔοπλος γὰρ εἶ.

Λάμ.: ταυτὶ λέγεις σὺ τὸν στρατηγὸν πτωχὸς ὤν; Δικ.: ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι πτωχός;
Λάμ.: ἀλλὰ τίς γὰρ εἶ; Δικ.: ὅστις; πολίτης χρηστός, οὐ σπουδαρχίδης,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ὅτου περ ὁ πόλεμος, στρατωνίδης,
σὺ δ᾽ ἐξ ὅτου περ ὁ πόλεμος, μισθαρχίδης.

Λάμ.: ἐχειροτόνησαν γάρ με — Δικ.: κόκκυγές γε τρεῖς.
ταῦτ᾽ οὖν ἐγὼ βδελυττόμενος ἐσπεισάμην,
ὁρῶν πολιοὺς μὲν ἄνδρας ἐν ταῖς τάξεσιν,
νεανίας δ᾽ οἵους σὺ διαδεδρακότας,
τοὺς μὲν ἐπὶ Θρᾴκης μισθοφοροῦντας τρεῖς δραχμάς,
Τεισαμενοφαινίππους Πανουργιππαρχίδας,
ἑτέρους δὲ παρὰ Χάρητι τοὺς δ᾽ ἐν Χάοσιν,

Γερητοθεοδώρους Διομειαλαζόνας,
τοὺς δ᾽ ἐν Καμαρίνῃ κἀν Γέλα κἀν Καταγέλᾳ.

Λάμ.: ἐχειροτονήθησαν γάρ.

Δικ.: αἴτιον δὲ τί
ὑμᾶς μὲν ἀεὶ μισθοφορεῖν ἀμῃγέπῃ,
τωνδὶ δὲ μηδέν᾽; ἑτεὸν ὦ Μαριλάδη
ἤδη πεπρέσβευκας σὺ πολιὸς ὢν ἢν ἦ;
ἀνένευσε· καίτοι γ᾽ ἐστὶ σώφρων κἀργάτης.
τί δαὶ Δράκυλλος ἢ Εὐφορίδης ἢ Πρινίδης;
εἶδέν τις ὑμῶν τἀκβάταν᾽ ἢ τοὺς Χάονας;
οὔ φασιν. ἀλλ᾽ ὁ Κοισύρας καὶ Λάμαχος,
οἷς ὑπ᾽ ἐράνου τε καὶ χρεῶν πρώην ποτέ,
ὥσπερ ἀπόνιπτρον ἐκχέοντες ἐσπέρας,
ἅπαντες ᾽ἐξίστω᾽ παρῄνουν οἱ φίλοι.

Λάμ.: ὦ δημοκρατία ταῦτα δῆτ᾽ ἀνασχετά; Δικ.: οὐ δῆτ᾽ ἐὰν μὴ μισθοφορῇ γε Λάμαχος.

Λάμ.: ἀλλ᾽ οὖν ἐγὼ μὲν πᾶσι Πελοποννησίοις
ἀεὶ πολεμήσω καὶ ταράξω πανταχῇ
καὶ ναυσὶ καὶ πεζοῖσι κατὰ τὸ καρτερόν.

Δικ.: ἐγὼ δὲ κηρύττω γε Πελοποννησίοις
ἅπασι καὶ Μεγαρεῦσι καὶ Βοιωτίοις
πωλεῖν ἀγοράζειν πρὸς ἐμέ, Λαμάχῳ δὲ μή.

Χορ.: ἀνὴρ νικᾷ τοῖσι λόγοισιν, καὶ τὸν δῆμον μεταπείθει
περὶ τῶν σπονδῶν. ἀλλ᾽ ἀποδύντες τοῖς ἀναπαίστοις ἐπίωμεν.
ἐξ οὗ γε χοροῖσιν ἐφέστηκεν τρυγικοῖς ὁ διδάσκαλος ἡμῶν,
οὔπω παρέβη πρὸς τὸ θέατρον λέξων ὡς δεξιός ἐστιν·
διαβαλλόμενος δ᾽ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἐν Ἀθηναίοις ταχυβούλοις,
ὡς κωμῳδεῖ τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν δῆμον καθυβρίζει,
ἀποκρίνασθαι δεῖται νυνὶ πρὸς Ἀθηναίους μεταβούλους.
φησὶν δ᾽ εἶναι πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν ἄξιος ὑμῖν ὁ ποιητής,
παύσας ὑμᾶς ξενικοῖσι λόγοις μὴ λίαν ἐξαπατᾶσθαι,
μήθ᾽ ἥδεσθαι θωπευομένους, μήτ᾽ εἶναι χαυνοπολίτας.
πρότερον δ᾽ ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν πόλεων οἱ πρέσβεις ἐξαπατῶντες

πρῶτον μὲν ἰοστεφάνους ἐκάλουν· κἀπειδὴ τοῦτό τις εἴποι,
εὐθὺς διὰ τοὺς στεφάνους ἐπ᾽ ἄκρων τῶν πυγιδίων ἐκάθησθε.
εἰ δέ τις ὑμᾶς ὑποθωπεύσας λιπαρὰς καλέσειεν Ἀθήνας,
ηὕρετο πᾶν ἂν διὰ τὰς λιπαράς, ἀφύων τιμὴν περιάψας.
ταῦτα ποιήσας πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν αἴτιος ὑμῖν γεγένηται,
καὶ τοὺς δήμους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν δείξας ὡς δημοκρατοῦνται.
τοιγάρτοι νῦν ἐκ τῶν πόλεων τὸν φόρον ὑμῖν ἀπάγοντες
ἥξουσιν ἰδεῖν ἐπιθυμοῦντες τὸν ποιητὴν τὸν ἄριστον,
ὅστις παρεκινδύνευσ᾽ εἰπεῖν ἐν Ἀθηναίοις τὰ δίκαια.
οὕτω δ᾽ αὐτοῦ περὶ τῆς τόλμης ἤδη πόρρω κλέος ἥκει,
ὅτε καὶ βασιλεὺς Λακεδαιμονίων τὴν πρεσβείαν βασανίζων
ἠρώτησεν πρῶτα μὲν αὐτοὺς πότεροι ταῖς ναυσὶ κρατοῦσιν,
εἶτα δὲ τοῦτον τὸν ποιητὴν ποτέρους εἴποι κακὰ πολλά·
τούτους γὰρ ἔφη τοὺς ἀνθρώπους πολὺ βελτίους γεγενῆσθαι
καὶ τῷ πολέμῳ πολὺ νικήσειν τοῦτον ξύμβουλον ἔχοντας.
διὰ ταῦθ᾽ ὑμᾶς Λακεδαιμόνιοι τὴν εἰρήνην προκαλοῦνται
καὶ τὴν Αἴγιναν ἀπαιτοῦσιν· καὶ τῆς νήσου μὲν ἐκείνης
οὐ φροντίζουσ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα τοῦτον τὸν ποιητὴν ἀφέλωνται.
ἀλλ᾽ ὑμεῖς τοι μή ποτ᾽ ἀφῆσθ᾽· ὡς κωμῳδήσει τὰ δίκαια·
φησὶν δ᾽ ὑμᾶς πολλὰ διδάξειν ἀγάθ᾽, ὥστ᾽ εὐδαίμονας εἶναι,
οὐ θωπεύων οὐδ᾽ ὑποτείνων μισθοὺς οὐδ᾽ ἐξαπατύλλων,
οὐδὲ πανουργῶν οὐδὲ κατάρδων, ἀλλὰ τὰ βέλτιστα διδάσκων.
πρὸς ταῦτα Κλέων καὶ παλαμάσθω
καὶ πᾶν ἐπ᾽ ἐμοὶ τεκταινέσθω.
τὸ γὰρ εὖ μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ καὶ τὸ δίκαιον
ξύμμαχον ἔσται, κοὐ μή ποθ᾽ ἁλῶ
περὶ τὴν πόλιν ὢν ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνος
δειλὸς καὶ λακαταπύγων.

δεῦρο Μοῦσ᾽ ἐλθὲ φλεγυρὰ πυρὸς ἔχουσα μένος ἔντονος Ἀχαρνική.
οἷον ἐξ ἀνθράκων πρινίνων φέψαλος ἀνήλατ᾽ ἐρεθιζόμενος οὐρίᾳ ῥιπίδι,
ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν ἐπανθρακίδες ὦσι παρακείμεναι,
οἱ δὲ Θασίαν ἀνακυκῶσι λιπαράμπυκα,
οἱ δὲ μάττωσιν, οὕτω σοβαρὸν ἐλθὲ μέλος ἔντονον ἀγροικότερον
ὡς ἐμὲ λαβοῦσα τὸν δημότην.
οἱ γέροντες οἱ παλαιοὶ μεμφόμεσθα τῇ πόλει·
οὐ γὰρ ἀξίως ἐκείνων ὧν ἐναυμαχήσαμεν
γηροβοσκούμεσθ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ὑμῶν, ἀλλὰ δεινὰ πάσχομεν,
οἵτινες γέροντας ἄνδρας ἐμβαλόντες ἐς γραφὰς

ὑπὸ νεανίσκων ἐᾶτε καταγελᾶσθαι ῥητόρων,
οὐδὲν ὄντας, ἀλλὰ κωφοὺς καὶ παρεξηυλημένους,
οἷς Ποσειδῶν ἀσφάλειός ἐστιν ἡ βακτηρία·
τονθορύζοντες δὲ γήρᾳ τῷ λίθῳ προσέσταμεν,
οὐχ ὁρῶντες οὐδὲν εἰ μὴ τῆς δίκης τὴν ἠλύγην.
ὁ δέ, νεανίας ἑαυτῷ σπουδάσας ξυνηγορεῖν,
ἐς τάχος παίει ξυνάπτων στρογγύλοις τοῖς ῥήμασιν·
κᾆτ᾽ ἀνελκύσας ἐρωτᾷ σκανδάληθρ᾽ ἱστὰς ἐπῶν
ἄνδρα Τιθωνὸν σπαράττων καὶ ταράττων καὶ κυκῶν.
ὁ δ᾽ ὑπὸ γήρως μασταρύζει, κᾆτ᾽ ὀφλὼν ἀπέρχεται,
εἶτα λύζει καὶ δακρύει καὶ λέγει πρὸς τοὺς φίλους,
᾽οὖ μ᾽ ἐχρῆν σορὸν πρίασθαι τοῦτ᾽ ὀφλὼν ἀπέρχομαι.᾽

ταῦτα πῶς εἰκότα, γέροντ᾽ ἀπολέσαι πολιὸν ἄνδρα περὶ κλεψύδραν,
πολλὰ δὴ ξυμπονήσαντα καὶ θερμὸν ἀπομορξάμενον ἀνδρικὸν ἱδρῶτα δὴ καὶ πολύν,
ἄνδρ᾽ ἀγαθὸν ὄντα Μαραθῶνι περὶ τὴν πόλιν;
εἶτα Μαραθῶνι μὲν ὅτ᾽ ἦμεν ἐδιώκομεν,
νῦν δ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀνδρῶν πονηρῶν σφόδρα διωκόμεθα, κᾆτα προσαλισκόμεθα.
πρὸς τάδε τίς ἀντερεῖ Μαρψίας;
τῷ γὰρ εἰκὸς ἄνδρα κυφὸν ἡλίκον Θουκυδίδην
ἐξολέσθαι συμπλακέντα τῇ Σκυθῶν ἐρημίᾳ,
τῷδε τῷ Κηφισοδήμῳ τῷ λάλῳ ξυνηγόρῳ;
ὥστ᾽ ἐγὼ μὲν ἠλέησα κἀπεμορξάμην ἰδὼν
ἄνδρα πρεσβύτην ὑπ᾽ ἀνδρὸς τοξότου κυκώμενον,
ὃς μὰ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽, ἐκεῖνος ἡνίκ᾽ ἦν Θουκυδίδης,
οὐδ᾽ ἂν αὐτὴν τὴν Ἀχαίαν ῥᾳδίως ἠνέσχετο,
ἀλλὰ κατεπάλαισε μέντἂν πρῶτον Εὐάθλους δέκα,
κατεβόησε δ᾽ ἂν κεκραγὼς τοξότας τρισχιλίους,
περιετόξευσεν δ᾽ ἂν αὐτοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς τοὺς ξυγγενεῖς.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπειδὴ τοὺς γέροντας οὐκ ἐᾶθ᾽ ὕπνου τυχεῖν,
ψηφίσασθε χωρὶς εἶναι τὰς γραφάς, ὅπως ἂν ᾖ
τῷ γέροντι μὲν γέρων καὶ νωδὸς ὁ ξυνήγορος,
τοῖς νέοισι δ᾽ εὐρύπρωκτος καὶ λάλος χὠ Κλεινίου.
κἀξελαύνειν χρὴ τὸ λοιπόν, κἂν φύγῃ τις ζημιοῦν,
τὸν γέροντα τῷ γέροντι, τὸν νέον δὲ τῷ νέῳ.

Δικ.: ὅροι μὲν ἀγορᾶς εἰσιν οἵδε τῆς ἐμῆς.
ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἀγοράζειν πᾶσι Πελοποννησίοις

ἔξεστι καὶ Μεγαρεῦσι καὶ Βοιωτίοις,
ἐφ᾽ ᾧτε πωλεῖν πρὸς ἐμέ, Λαμάχῳ δὲ μή.
ἀγορανόμους δὲ τῆς ἀγορᾶς καθίσταμαι
τρεῖς τοὺς λαχόντας τούσδ᾽ ἰμάντας ἐκ Λεπρῶν.
ἐνταῦθα μήτε συκοφάντης εἰσίτω
μήτ᾽ ἄλλος ὅστις Φασιανός ἐστ᾽ ἀνήρ.
ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν στήλην καθ᾽ ἣν ἐσπεισάμην
μέτειμ᾽, ἵνα στήσω φανερὰν ἐν τἀγορᾷ.
Μεγαρεύς
ἀγορὰ ν᾽ Ἀθάναις χαῖρε Μεγαρεῦσιν φίλα.
ἐπόθουν τυ ναὶ τὸν φίλιον περ ματέρα.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ πόνηρα κώρι᾽ ἀθλίω πατρός,
ἄμβατε ποττὰν μᾶδδαν, αἴ χ᾽ εὕρητέ πᾶ.
ἀκούετε δή, ποτέχετ᾽ ἐμὶν τὰν γαστέρα·
πότερα πεπρᾶσθαι χρῄδδετ᾽ ἢ πεινῆν κακῶς;
Κόρα πεπρᾶσθαι πεπρᾶσθαι.

Μεγ.: ἐγώνγα καὐτός φαμι. τίς δ᾽ οὕτως ἄνους
ὃς ὑμέ κα πρίαιτο φανερὰν ζαμίαν;
ἀλλ᾽ ἔστι γάρ μοι Μεγαρικά τις μαχανά,
χοίρως γὰρ ὑμὲ σκευάσας φασῶ φέρειν.
περίθεσθε τάσδε τὰς ὁπλὰς τῶν χοιρίων.
ὅπως δὲ δοξεῖτ᾽ εἶμεν ἐξ ἀγαθᾶς ὑός·
ὡς ναὶ τὸν Ἑρμᾶν, αἴπερ ἰξεῖτ᾽ οἴκαδις
ἄπρατα, πειρασεῖσθε τᾶς λιμῶ κακῶς.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀμφίθεσθε καὶ ταδὶ τὰ ῥυγχία,
κἤπειτεν ἐς τὸυ σάκκον ὦδ᾽ ἐσβαίνετε.
ὅπως δὲ γρυλλιξεῖτε καὶ κοἴξετε
χἠσεῖτε φωνὰν χοιρίων μυστηρικῶν.
ἐγὼν δὲ καρυξῶ Δικαιόπολιν ὅπᾳ·
Δικαιόπολι, ἦ λῇς πρίασθαι χοιρία; Δικ.: τί; ἀνὴρ Μεγαρικός;

Μεγ.: ἀγορασοῦντες ἵκομες.

Δικ.: πῶς ἔχετε; Μεγ.: διαπεινᾶμες ἀεὶ ποττὸ πῦρ.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ ἠδύ τοι νὴ τὸν Δἴ, ἢν αὐλὸς παρῇ.
τί δ᾽ ἄλλο πράττεθ᾽ οἱ Μεγαρῆς νῦν; Μεγ.: οἷα δή.
ὅκα μὲν ἐγὼν τηνῶθεν ἐμπορευόμαν,

ἄνδρες πρόβουλοι τοῦτ᾽ ἔπραττον τᾷ πόλει,
ὅπως τάχιστα καὶ κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολοίμεθα.

Δικ.: αὐτίκ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἀπαλλάξεσθε πραγμάτων.

Μεγ.: σά μάν;

Δικ.: τί δ᾽ ἄλλο Μεγαροῖ; πῶς ὁ σῖτος ὤνιος; Μεγ.: παρ᾽ ἀμὶ πολυτίματος περ τοὶ θεοί.

Δικ.: ἄλας οὖν φέρεις;

Μεγ.: οὐχ ὑμὲς αὐτῶν ἄρχετε; Δικ.: οὐδὲ σκόροδα; Μεγ.: ποῖα σκόροδ᾽; ὑμὲς τῶν ἀεί,
ὅκκ᾽ ἐσβάλητε, τὼς ἀρωραῖοι μύες
πάσσακι τὰς ἄγλιθας ἐξορύσσετε.

Δικ.: τί δαὶ φέρεις; Μεγ.: χοίρως ἐγώνγα μυστικάς.

Δικ.: καλῶς λέγεις· ἐπίδειξον.

Μεγ.: ἀλλὰ μὰν καλαί.
ἄντεινον αἰ λῇς· ὡς παχεῖα καὶ καλά.

Δικ.: τουτὶ τί ἦν τὸ πρᾶγμα; Μεγ.: χοῖρος ναὶ Δία.

Δικ.: τί λέγεις σύ; ποδαπὴ δή ᾽στι χοῖρος; Μεγ.: Μεγαρικά.
ἢ οὐ χοῖρός ἐσθ᾽ ἅδ᾽; Δικ.: οὐκ ἔμοιγε φαίνεται.

Μεγ.: οὐ δεινά; θᾶσθε τῶδε τὰς ἀπιστίας·
οὔ φατι τάνδε χοῖρον εἶμεν. ἀλλὰ μάν,
αἰ λῇς, περίδου μοι περὶ θυμιτιδᾶν ἁλῶν,
αἰ μή ᾽στιν οὗτος χοῖρος Ἑλλάνων νόμῳ.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ ἔστιν ἀνθρώπου γε.

Μεγ.: ναὶ τὸν Διοκλέα
ἐμά γα. τὺ δέ νιν εἶμεναι τίνος δοκεῖς;
ἦ λῇς ἀκοῦσαι φθεγγομένας; Δικ.: νὴ τοὺς θεούς
ἔγωγε.

Μεγ.: φώνει δὴ τὺ ταχέως χοιρίον.
οὐ χρῆσθα; σιγῇς ὦ κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολουμένα;
πάλιν τυ ἀποισῶ ναὶ τὸν Ἑρμᾶν οἴκαδις.
Κόρη κοὶ κοΐ.

Μεγ.: αὕτα ᾽στὶ χοῖρος; Δικ.: νῦν γε χοῖρος φαίνεται.
ἀτὰρ ἐκτραφείς γε κύσθος ἔσται.

Μεγ.: πέντ᾽ ἐτῶν,
σάφ᾽ ἴσθι, ποττὰν ματέρ᾽ εἰκασθήσεται.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ θύσιμός ἐστιν αὐτηγί.

Μεγ.: σά μάν;
πᾷ δ᾽ οὐχὶ θύσιμός ἐστι;

Δικ.: κέρκον οὐκ ἔχει.

Μεγ.: νεαρὰ γάρ ἐστιν· ἀλλὰ δελφακουμένα
ἐξεῖ μεγάλαν τε καὶ παχεῖαν κἠρυθράν.
ἀλλ᾽ αἰ τράφειν λῇς, ἄδε τοι χοῖρος καλά.

Δικ.: ὡς ξυγγενὴς ὁ κύσθος αὐτῆς θατέρᾳ.

Μεγ.: ὁμοματρία γάρ ἐστι κἠκ τωὐτῶ πατρός.
αἰ δ᾽ ἂν παχυνθῇ κἀναχνοιανθῇ τριχί,
κάλλιστος ἔσται χοῖρος Ἀφροδίτᾳ θύειν.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ χοῖρος τἀφροδίτῃ θύεται.

Μεγ.: οὐ χοῖρος Ἀφροδίτᾳ; μόνᾳ γα δαιμόνων.
καὶ γίνεταί γα τᾶνδε τᾶν χοίρων τὸ κρῆς
ἄδιστον ἂν τὸν ὀδελὸν ἐμπεπαρμένον.

Δικ.: ἤδη δ᾽ ἄνευ τῆς μητρὸς ἐσθίοιεν ἄν; Μεγ.: ναὶ τὸν Ποτειδᾶν καί κ᾽ ἄνις γα τῶ πατρός.

Δικ.: τί δ᾽ ἐσθίει μάλιστα; Μεγ.: πάνθ᾽ ἅ κα διδῷς.
αὐτὸς δ᾽ ἐρώτη.

Δικ.: χοῖρε χοῖρε.
Κόρα κοὶ κοῖ.

Δικ.: τρώγοις ἂν ἐρεβίνθους;
Κόρα κοὶ κοὶ κοῖ.

Δικ.: τί δαί; φιβάλεως ἰσχάδας;
Κόρα κοὶ κοῖ.

Δικ.: τί δαὶ σύ; τρώγοις ἄν;
Κόρα κοὶ κοὶ κοῖ.

Δικ.: ὡς ὀξὺ πρὸς τὰς ἰσχάδας κεκράγατε.
ἐνεγκάτω τις ἔνδοθεν τῶν ἰσχάδων
τοῖς χοιριδίοισιν. ἆρα τρώξονται; βαβαί,
οἷον ῥοθιάζουσ᾽ ὦ πολυτίμηθ᾽ Ἡράκλεις.
ποδαπὰ τὰ χοιρί᾽; ὡς Τραγασαῖα φαίνεται.

Μεγ.: ἀλλ᾽ οὔτι πάσας κατέτραγον τὰς ἰσχάδας.
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτᾶν τάνδε μίαν ἀνειλόμαν.

Δικ.: νὴ τὸν Δῖ ἀστείω γε τὼ βοσκήματε·
πόσου πρίωμαί σοι τὰ χοιρίδια; λέγε.

Μεγ.: τὸ μὲν ἄτερον τούτων σκορόδων τροπαλίδος,
τὸ δ᾽ ἄτερον, αἰ λῇς, χοίνικος μόνας ἁλῶν.

Δικ.: ὠνήσομαί σοι· περίμεν᾽ αὐτοῦ.

Μεγ.: ταῦτα δή.
Ἑρμᾶ ᾽μπολαῖε τὰν γυναῖκα τὰν ἐμὰν
οὕτω μ᾽ ἀποδόσθαι τάν τ᾽ ἐμωυτῶ τ᾽ ἐμωυτῶ ματέρα.
Συκοφάντης
ὦνθρωπε ποδαπός; Μεγ.: χοιροπώλας Μεγαρικός.
Συκοφάντης
τὰ χοιρίδια τοίνυν ἐγὼ φανῶ ταδὶ
πολέμια καὶ σέ.

Μεγ.: τοῦτ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽, ἵκει πάλιν
ὅθενπερ ἀρχὰ τῶν κακῶν ἁμῖν ἔφυ.

Συκοφάντης
κλάων μεγαριεῖς. οὐκ ἀφήσεις τὸν σάκον; Μεγ.: Δικαιόπολι Δικαιόπολι φαντάδδομαι.

Δικ.: ὑπὸ τοῦ; τίς ὁ φαίνων σ᾽ ἐστίν; ἀγορανόμοι,
τοὺς συκοφάντας οὐ θύραζ᾽ ἐξείρξετε;
τί δὴ μαθὼν φαίνεις ἄνευ θρυαλλίδος;
Συκοφάντης
οὐ γὰρ φανῶ τοὺς πολεμίους; Δικ.: κλάων γε σύ,
εἰ μὴ ᾽τέρωσε συκοφαντήσεις τρέχων.

Μεγ.: οἷον τὸ κακὸν ἐν ταῖς Ἀθάναις τοῦτ᾽ ἔνι.

Δικ.: θάρρει Μεγαρίκ᾽· ἀλλ᾽ ἧς τὰ χοιρίδι᾽ ἀπέδου
τιμῆς, λαβὲ ταυτὶ τὰ σκόροδα καὶ τοὺς ἅλας,
καὶ χαῖρε πόλλ᾽.

Μεγ.: ἀλλ᾽ ἀμὶν οὐκ ἐπιχώριον.

Δικ.: πολυπραγμοσύνη νυν ἐς κεφαλὴν τράποιτ᾽ ἐμοί.
Μεγαρεύς
ὦ χοιρίδια πειρῆσθε κἄνις τῶ πατρὸς
παίειν ἐφ᾽ ἁλὶ τὰν μᾶδδαν, αἴκα τις διδῷ.

Χορ.: εὐδαιμονεῖ γ᾽ ἄνθρωπος. οὐκ ἤκουσας οἷ προβαίνει
τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦ βουλεύματος; καρπώσεται γὰρ ἀνὴρ
ἐν τἀγορᾷ καθήμενος·
κἂν εἰσίῃ τις Κτησίας
ἢ συκοφάντης ἄλλος, οἰμώζων
καθεδεῖται·
οὐδ᾽ ἄλλος ἀνθρώπων ὑποψωνῶν σε πημανεῖ τι,
οὐδ᾽ ἐξομόρξεται Πρέπις τὴν εὐρυπρωκτίαν σοι,
οὐδ᾽ ὠστιεῖ Κλεωνύμῳ·
χλαῖναν δ᾽ ἔχων φανὴν δίει
κοὐ ξυντυχών σ᾽ Ὑπέρβολος
δικῶν ἀναπλήσει·
οὐδ᾽ ἐντυχὼν ἐν τἀγορᾷ πρόσεισί σοι βαδίζων
Κρατῖνος ἀεὶ κεκαρμένος μοιχὸν μιᾷ μαχαίρᾳ,
ὁ περιπόνηρος Ἀρτέμων,

ὁ ταχὺς ἄγαν τὴν μουσικήν,
ὄζων κακὸν τῶν μασχαλῶν
πατρὸς Τραγασαίου·
οὐδ᾽ αὖθις αὖ σε σκώψεται Παύσων ὁ παμπόνηρος
Λυσίστρατός τ᾽ ἐν τἀγορᾷ, Χολαργέων ὄνειδος,
ὁ περιαλουργὸς τοῖς κακοῖς,
ῥιγῶν τε καὶ πεινῶν ἀεὶ
πλεῖν ἢ τριάκονθ᾽ ἡμέρας
τοῦ μηνὸς ἑκάστου.
Βοιωτός
ἴττω Ἡρακλῆς ἔκαμόν γα τὰν τύλαν κακῶς·
κατάθου τὺ τὰν γλάχων᾽ ἀτρέμας Ἰσμηνία·
ὑμὲς δ᾽ ὅσοι Θείβαθεν αὐληταὶ πάρα
τοῖς ὀστίνοις φυσῆτε τὸν πρωκτὸν κυνός.

Δικ.: παῦ᾽ ἐς κόρακας. οἱ σφῆκες οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν θυρῶν;
πόθεν προσέπτονθ᾽ οἱ κακῶς ἀπολούμενοι
ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν μοι Χαιριδῆς βομβαύλιοι;
Βοιωτός
νεὶ τὸν Ἰόλαον ἐπεχαρίττα γ᾽ ὦ ξένε·
Θείβαθε γὰρ φυσᾶντες ἐξόπισθέ μου
τἄνθια τᾶς γλάχωνος ἀπέκιξαν χαμαί.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴ τι βούλει, πρίασο τῶν ἐγὼ φέρω
τῶν ὀρταλίχων ἢ τῶν τετραπτερυλλίδων.

Δικ.: ὦ χαῖρε κολλικοφάγε Βοιωτίδιον.
τί φέρεις;
Βοιωτός
ὅσ᾽ ἐστὶν ἀγαθὰ Βοιωτοῖς ἁπλῶς,
ὀρίγανον γλαχὼ ψιάθως θρυαλλίδας
νάσσας κολοιὼς ἀτταγᾶς φαλαρίδας
τροχίλως κολύμβως.

Δικ.: ὡσπερεὶ χειμὼν ἄρα
ὀρνιθίας ἐς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐλήλυθας.
Βοιωτός
καὶ μὰν φέρω χᾶνας λαγὼς ἀλώπεκας
σκάλοπας ἐχίνως αἰελούρως πικτίδας
ἰκτῖδας ἐνύδρως ἐγχέλεις Κωπαΐδας.

Δικ.: ὦ τερπνότατον σὺ τέμαχος ἀνθρώποις φέρων,
δός μοι προσειπεῖν, εἰ φέρεις, τὰς ἐγχέλεις.
Βοιωτός
πρέσβειρα πεντήκοντα Κωπάδων κορᾶν,
ἔκβαθι τῶδε κἠπιχάριτται τῷ ξένῳ.

Δικ.: ὦ φιλτάτη σὺ καὶ πάλαι ποθουμένη,
ἦλθες ποθεινὴ μὲν τρυγῳδικοῖς χοροῖς,
φίλη δὲ Μορύχῳ. δμῶες ἐξενέγκατε
τὴν ἐσχάραν μοι δεῦρο καὶ τὴν ῥιπίδα.
σκέψασθε παῖδες τὴν ἀρίστην ἔγχελυν,
ἥκουσαν ἔκτῳ μόλις ἔτει ποθουμένην·
προσείπατ᾽ αὐτὴν ὦ τέκν᾽· ἄνθρακας δ᾽ ἐγὼ
ὑμῖν παρέξω τῆσδε τῆς ξένης χάριν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἔσφερ᾽ αὐτήν· μηδὲ γὰρ θανών ποτε
σοῦ χωρὶς εἴην ἐντετευτλανωμένης.
Βοιωτός
ἐμοὶ δὲ τιμὰ τᾶσδε πᾷ γενήσεται;

Δικ.: ἀγορᾶς τέλος ταύτην γέ που δώσεις ἐμοί·
ἀλλ᾽ εἴ τι πωλεῖς τῶνδε τῶν ἄλλων λέγε.
Βοιωτός
ἰώγα ταῦτα πάντα.

Δικ.: φέρε πόσου λέγεις;
ἢ φορτί᾽ ἕτερ᾽ ἐνθένδ᾽ ἐκεῖσ᾽ ἄξεις ἰών;
Βοιωτός
ὅ τι γ᾽ ἔστ᾽ Ἀθάναις, ἐν Βοιωτοῖσιν δὲ μή.

Δικ.: ἀφύας ἄρ᾽ ἄξεις πριάμενος Φαληρικὰς
ἢ κέραμον.
Βοιωτός
ἀφύας ἢ κέραμον; ἀλλ᾽ ἔντ᾽ ἐκεῖ·
ἀλλ᾽ ὅ τι παρ᾽ ἀμῖν μή ᾽στι, τᾷδε δ᾽ αὖ πολύ.

Δικ.: ἐγᾦδα τοίνυν· συκοφάντην ἔξαγε,
ὥσπερ κέραμον ἐνδησάμενος.
Βοιωτός
νεὶ τὼ θιὼ

λάβοιμι μέντἂν κέρδος ἀγαγὼν καὶ πολύ,
περ πίθακον ἀλιτρίας πολλᾶς πλέων.

Δικ.: καὶ μὴν ὁδὶ Νίκαρχος ἔρχεται φανῶν.
Βοιωτός
μικκός γα μᾶκος οὗτος.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ ἅπαν κακόν.
Νίκαρχος
ταυτὶ τίνος τὰ φορτί᾽ ἐστί;
Βοιωτός
τῶδ᾽ ἐμὰ
Θείβαθεν, ἴττω Δεύς.
Νίκ.: ἐγὼ τοίνυν ὁδὶ
φαίνω πολέμια ταῦτα.
Βοιωτός
τί δὲ κακὸν παθὼν
ὀρναπετίοισι πόλεμον ἦρα καί μάχαν;
Νίκ.: καὶ σέ γε φανῶ πρὸς τοῖσδε.
Βοιωτός
τί ἀδικείμενος;
Νίκ.: ἐγὼ φράσω σοι τῶν περιεστώτων χάριν·
ἐκ τῶν πολεμίων γ᾽ εἰσάγεις θρυαλλίδας.

Δικ.: ἔπειτα φαίνεις δῆτα διὰ θρυαλλίδα;
Νίκ.: αὕτη γὰρ ἐμπρήσειεν ἂν τὸ νεώριον.

Δικ.: νεώριον θρυαλλίς;
Νίκ.: οἶμαι·

Δικ.: τίνι τρόπῳ;
Νίκ.: ἐνθεὶς ἂν ἐς τίφην ἀνὴρ Βοιώτιος
ἅψας ἄν ἐσπέμψειεν ἐς τὸ νεώριον
δι᾽ ὑδρορρόας, βορέαν ἐπιτηρήσας μέγαν.
κεἴπερ λάβοιτο τῶν νεῶν τὸ πῦρ ἅπαξ,
σελαγοῖντ᾽ ἂν εὐθύς.

Δικ.: ὦ κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολούμενε,
σελαγοῖντ᾽ ἂν ὑπὸ τίφης τε καὶ θρυαλλίδος;

Νίκ.: μαρτύρομαι.

Δικ.: ξυλλάμβαν᾽ αὐτοῦ τὸ στόμα·
δός μοι φορυτόν, ἵν᾽ αὐτὸν ἐνδήσας φέρω
ὥσπερ κέραμον ἵνα μὴ καταγῇ φερόμενος.

Χορ.: ἔνδησον ὦ βέλτιστε τῷ
ξένῳ καλῶς τὴν ἐμπολὴν 930
οὕτως ὅπως
ἂν μὴ θέρων κατάξῃ.

Δικ.: ἐμοὶ μελήσει ταῦτ᾽, ἐπεί
τοι καὶ ψοφεῖ λάλον τι καὶ
πυρορραγὲς 935
κἄλλως θεοῖσιν ἐχθρόν.

Χορ.: τί χρήσεταί ποτ᾽ αὐτῷ; 935

Δικ.: πάγχρηστον ἄγγος ἔσται,
κρατὴρ κακῶν, τριπτὴρ δικῶν,
φαίνειν ὑπευθύνους λυχνοῦχος
καὶ κύλιξ —
καὶ πράγματ᾽ ἐγκυκᾶσθαι. 939β

Χορ.: πῶς δ᾽ ἂν πεποιθοίη τις ἀγγείῳ 940
τοιούτῳ χρώμενος
κατ᾽ οἰκίαν
τοσόνδ᾽ ἀεὶ ψοφοῦντι; Δικ.: ἰσχυρόν ἐστιν ὦγάθ᾽, ὥστ᾽
οὐκ ἂν καταγείη ποτ᾽, εἴπερ 945
ἐκ ποδῶν
κατωκάρα κρέμαιτο. 945

Χορ.: ἤδη καλῶς ἔχει σοι.
Βοιωτός
μέλλω γά τοι θερίδδειν.

Χορ.: ἀλλ᾽ ὦ ξένων βέλτιστε συνθέριζε
καὶ τοῦτον λαβὼν
πρόσβαλλ᾽ ὅποι βούλει φέρων 950
πρὸς πάντα συκοφάντην.

Δικ.: μόλις γ᾽ ἐνέδησα τὸν κακῶς ἀπολούμενον.
αἴρου λαβὼν τὸν κέραμον ὦ Βοιώτιε.
Βοιωτός
ὑπόκυπτε τὰν τύλαν ἰὼν Ἰσμήνιχε.

Δικ.: χὤπως κατοίσεις αὐτὸν εὐλαβούμενος.
πάντως μὲν οἴσεις οὐδὲν ὑγιές, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως·
κἂν τοῦτο κερδήνῃς ἄγων τὸ φορτίον,
εὐδαιμονήσεις συκοφαντῶν γ᾽ οὕνεκα.
Θεράπων Λαμάχου
Δικαιόπολι.Δικαιόπολις
τίς ἔστι; τί με βωστρεῖς;
Θεράπων Λαμάχου
ὅ τι;
ἐκέλευε Λάμαχός σε ταυτησὶ δραχμῆς
ἐς τοὺς Χοᾶς αὐτῷ μεταδοῦναι τῶν κιχλῶν,
τριῶν δραχμῶν δ᾽ ἐκέλευε Κωπᾷδ᾽ ἔγχελυν.

Δικ.: ὁ ποῖος οὗτος Λάμαχος τὴν ἔγχελυν;
Θεράπων Λαμάχου
ὁ δεινός, ὁ ταλαύρινος, ὃς τὴν Γοργόνα
πάλλει κραδαίνων τρισὶ κατάσκιος λόφοις.

Δικ.: οὐκ ἂν μὰ Δί᾽ εἰ δοίη γέ μοι τὴν ἀσπίδα·
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ ταρίχει τοὺς λόφους κραδαινέτω·
ἢν δ᾽ ἀπολιγαίνῃ, τοὺς ἀγορανόμους καλῶ.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐμαυτῷ τόδε λαβὼν τὸ φορτίον
εἴσειμ᾽ ὑπαὶ πτερύγων κιχλᾶν καὶ κοψίχων.

Χορ.: εἶδες ὦ εἶδες ὦ πᾶσα πόλι τὸν φρόνιμον ἄνδρα τὸν ὑπέρσοφον,
οἷ᾽ ἔχει σπεισάμενος ἐμπορικὰ χρήματα διεμπολᾶν,
ὧν τὰ μὲν ἐν οἰκίᾳ χρήσιμα, τὰ δ᾽ αὖ πρέπει χλιαρὰ κατεσθίειν.
αὐτόματα πάντ᾽ ἀγαθὰ τῷδέ γε πορίζεται.
οὐδέποτ᾽ ἐγὼ Πόλεμον οἴκαδ᾽ ὑποδέξομαι,
οὐδὲ παρ᾽ ἐμοί ποτε τὸν Ἁρμόδιον ᾄσεται
ξυγκατακλινείς, ὅτι παροινικὸς ἀνὴρ ἔφυ,
ὅστις ἐπὶ πάντ᾽ ἀγάθ᾽ ἔχοντας ἐπικωμάσας
ἠργάσατο πάντα κακά, κἀνέτρεπε κἀξέχει
κἀμάχετο καὶ προσέτι πολλὰ προκαλουμένου

᾽πῖνε κατάκεισο λαβὲ τήνδε φιλοτησίαν᾽
τὰς χάρακας ἧπτε πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐν τῷ πυρί,
ἐξέχει θ᾽ ἡμῶν βίᾳ τὸν οἶνον ἐκ τῶν ἀμπέλων.

Χορ.: <οὐτοσὶ δ᾽> ἐπτέρωταί τ᾽ ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον ἅμα καὶ μεγάλα δὴ φρονεῖ,
τοῦ βίου δ᾽ ἐξέβαλε δεῖγμα <τάδε> τὰ πτερὰ πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν.
ὦ Κύπριδι τῇ καλῇ καὶ Χάρισι ταῖς φίλαις ξύντροφε Διαλλαγή,
ὡς καλὸν ἔχουσα τὸ πρόσωπον ἄρ᾽ ἐλάνθανες.
πῶς ἂν ἐμὲ καὶ σέ τις Ἔρως ξυναγάγοι λαβών,
ὥσπερ ὁ γεγραμμένος ἔχων στέφανον ἀνθέμων.
ἢ πάνυ γερόντιον ἴσως νενόμικάς με σύ;
ἀλλά σε λαβὼν τρία δοκῶ γ᾽ ἂν ἔτι προσβαλεῖν·
πρῶτα μὲν ἂν ἀμπελίδος ὄρχον ἐλάσαι μακρόν,
εἶτα παρὰ τόνδε νέα μοσχίδια συκίδων,
καὶ τὸ τρίτον ἡμερίδος ὄρχον, ὁ γέρων ὁδί,
καὶ περὶ τὸ χωρίον ἑλᾷδας ἅπαν ἐν κύκλῳ,
ὥστ᾽ ἀλείφεσθαί σ᾽ ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν κἀμὲ ταῖς νουμηνίαις.

Κῆρ. ἀκούετε λεῲ· κατὰ τὰ πάτρια τοὺς Χοᾶς
πίνειν ὑπὸ τῆς σάλπιγγος· ὃς δ᾽ ἂν ἐκπίῃ
πρώτιστος, ἀσκὸν Κτησιφῶντος λήψεται.

Δικ.: ὦ παῖδες ὦ γυναῖκες οὐκ ἠκούσατε;
τί δρᾶτε; τοῦ κήρυκος οὐκ ἀκούετε;
ἀναβράττετ᾽ ἐξοπτᾶτε τρέπετ᾽ ἀφέλκετε
τὰ λαγῷα ταχέως, τοὺς στεφάνους ἀνείρετε.
φέρε τοὺς ὀβελίσκους, ἵν᾽ ἀναπείρω τὰς κίχλας.

Χορ.: ζηλῶ σε τῆς εὐβουλίας,
μᾶλλον δὲ τῆς εὐωχίας
ἄνθρωπε τῆς παρούσης.

Δικ.: τί δῆτ᾽ ἐπειδὰν τὰς κίχλας ὀπτωμένας ἴδητε; Χορ.: οἶμαί σε καὶ τοῦτ᾽ εὖ λέγειν.Δικαιόπολις
τὸ πῦρ ὑποσκάλευε.

Χορ.: ἤκουσας ὡς μαγειρικῶς
κομψῶς τε καὶ δειπνητικῶς
αὐτῷ διακονεῖται;

Γεωργός
οἴμοι τάλας.

Δικ.: ὦ Ἡράκλεις τίς οὐτοσί;
Γεωργός
ἀνὴρ κακοδαίμων.

Δικ.: κατὰ σεαυτόν νυν τρέπου.
Γεωργός
ὦ φίλτατε, σπονδαὶ γάρ εἰσι σοὶ μόνῳ,
μέτρησον εἰρήνης τί μοι, κἂν πέντ᾽ ἔτη.

Δικ.: τί δ᾽ ἔπαθες;
Γεωργός
ἐπετρίβην ἀπολέσας τὼ βόε.

Δικ.: πόθεν;
Γεωργός
ἀπὸ Φυλῆς ἔλαβον οἱ Βοιώτιοι.

Δικ.: ὦ τρισκακόδαιμον εἶτα λευκὸν ἀμπέχει;
Γεωργός
καὶ ταῦτα μέντοι νὴ Δῖ ὥπερ μ᾽ ἐτρεφέτην
ἐν πᾶσι βολίτοις.

Δικ.: εἶτα νυνὶ τοῦ δέει;
Γεωργός
ἀπόλωλα τὼφθαλμὼ δακρύων τὼ βόε.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴ τι κήδει Δερκέτου Φυλασίου,
ὑπάλειψον εἰρήνῃ με τὼφθαλμὼ ταχύ.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ ὦ πόνηρ᾽ οὐ δημοσιεύων τυγχάνω.
Γεωργός
ἴθ᾽ ἀντιβολῶ σ᾽, ἤν πως κομίσωμαι τὼ βόε.

Δικ.: οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ κλᾶε πρὸς τοὺς Πιττάλου.
Γεωργός
σὺ δ᾽ ἀλλά μοι σταλαγμὸν εἰρήνης ἕνα
ἐς τὸν καλαμίσκον ἐνστάλαξον τουτονί.

Δικ.: οὐδ᾽ ἂν στριβιλικίγξ· ἀλλ᾽ ἀπιὼν οἴμωζέ ποι.
Γεωργός
οἴμοι κακοδαίμων τοῖν γεωργοῖν βοιδίοιν.

Χορ.:
ἀνὴρ ἀνηύρηκέν τι ταῖς
σπονδαῖσιν ἡδύ, κοὐκ ἔοικεν
οὐδενὶ μεταδώσειν.

Δικ.: κατάχει σὺ τῆς χορδῆς τὸ μέλι, τὰς σηπίας στάθευε.

Χορ.: ἤκουσας ὀρθιασμάτων;Δικαιόπολις
ὀπτᾶτε τἀγχέλεια.

Χορ.: ἀποκτενεῖς λιμῷ ᾽μὲ καὶ
τοὺς γείτονας κνίσῃ τε καὶ
φωνῇ τοιαῦτα λάσκων.

Δικ.: ὀπτᾶτε ταυτὶ καὶ καλῶς ξανθίζετε.
Παράνυμφος
Δικαιόπολι.

Δικ.:τίς οὐτοσί; τίς οὐτοσί;
Παράνυμφος
ἔπεμψέ τίς σοι νυμφίος ταυτὶ κρέα
ἐκ τῶν γάμων.

Δικ.: καλῶς γε ποιῶν ὅστις ἦν.
Παράνυμφος
ἐκέλευε δ᾽ ἐγχέαι σε τῶν κρεῶν χάριν,
ἵνα μὴ στρατεύοιτ᾽ ἀλλὰ βινοίη μένων,
ἐς τὸν ἀλάβαστον κύαθον εἰρήνης ἕνα.

Δικ.: ἀπόφερ᾽ ἀπόφερε τὰ κρέα καὶ μή μοι δίδου,
ὡς οὐκ ἂν ἐγχέαιμι μυρίων δραχμῶν.
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτηὶ τίς ἔστιν;
Παράνυμφος
ἡ νυμφεύτρια
δεῖται παρὰ τῆς νύμφης τι σοὶ λέξαι μόνῳ.

Δικ.: φέρε δὴ τί σὺ λέγεις; ὡς γέλοιον ὦ θεοὶ
τὸ δέημα τῆς νύμφης ὃ δεῖταί μου σφόδρα,
ὅπως ἂν οἰκουρῇ τὸ πέος τοῦ νυμφίου.
φέρε δεῦρο τὰς σπονδάς, ἵν᾽ αὐτῇ δῶ μόνῃ,
ὁτιὴ γυνή ᾽στι τοῦ πολέμου τ᾽ οὐκ αἰτία.
ὕπεχ᾽ ὦδε δεῦρο τοὐξάλειπτρον ὦ γύναι.
οἶσθ᾽ ὡς ποιεῖτε; τοῦτο τῇ νύμφῃ φράσον,
ὅταν στρατιώτας καταλέγωσι, τουτῳὶ
νύκτωρ ἀλειφέτω τὸ πέος τοῦ νυμφίου.
ἀπόφερε τὰς σπονδάς. φέρε τὴν οἰνήρυσιν,
ἵν᾽ οἶνον ἐγχέω λαβὼν ἐς τοὺς Χοᾶς.

Χορ.: καὶ μὴν ὁδί τις τὰς ὀφρῦς ἀνεσπακὼς·
ὥσπερ τι δεινὸν ἀγγελῶν ἐπείγεται.
Ἄγγελος Α
ἰὼ πόνοι τε καὶ μάχαι καὶ Λάμαχοι.

Λάμ.: τίς ἀμφὶ χαλκοφάλαρα δώματα κτυπεῖ;
Ἄγγελος Α
ἰέναι σ᾽ ἐκέλευον οἱ στρατηγοὶ τήμερον
ταχέως λαβόντα τοὺς λόχους καὶ τοὺς λόφους·
κἄπειτα τηρεῖν νειφόμενον τὰς ἐσβολάς.
ὑπὸ τοὺς Χοᾶς γὰρ καὶ Χύτρους αὐτοῖσί τις
ἤγγειλε λῃστὰς ἐμβαλεῖν Βοιωτίους.

Λάμ.: ἰὼ στρατηγοὶ πλείονες ἢ βελτίονες.
οὐ δεινὰ μὴ ᾽ξεῖναί με μηδ᾽ ἑορτάσαι; Δικ.: ἰὼ στράτευμα πολεμολαμαχαϊκόν.

Λάμ.: οἴμοι κακοδαίμων καταγελᾷς ἤδη σύ μου.

Δικ.: βούλει μάχεσθαι Γηρυόνῃ τετραπτίλῳ; Λάμ.: αἰαῖ
οἵαν ὁ κῆρυξ ἀγγελίαν ἤγγειλέ μοι.

Δικ.: αἰαῖ τίνα δ᾽ αὖ μοι προστρέχει τις ἀγγελῶν;
Ἄγγελος Β
Δικαιόπολι.

Δικ.: τί ἔστιν;
Ἄγγελος Β

ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ταχὺ
βάδιζε τὴν κίστην λαβὼν καὶ τὸν χοᾶ.
ὁ τοῦ Διονύσου γάρ σ᾽ ἱερεὺς μεταπέμπεται.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐγκόνει· δειπνεῖν κατακωλύεις πάλαι.
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα πάντ᾽ ἐστὶν παρεσκευασμένα,
κλῖναι τράπεζαι προσκεφάλαια στρώματα 1090
στέφανοι μύρον τραγήματθ᾽, αἱ πόρναι πάρα,
ἄμυλοι πλακοῦντες σησαμοῦντες ἴτρια,
ὀρχηστρίδες, τὰ φίλταθ᾽ Ἁρμοδίου, καλαί.
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα σπεῦδε.

Λάμ.: κακοδαίμων ἐγώ.

Δικ.: καὶ γὰρ σὺ μεγάλην ἐπεγράφου τὴν Γοργόνα. 1095
σύγκλῃε, καὶ δεῖπνόν τις ἐνσκευαζέτω.

Λάμ.: παῖ παῖ φέρ᾽ ἔξω δεῦρο τὸν γυλιὸν ἐμοί.

Δικ.: παῖ παῖ φέρ᾽ ἔξω δεῦρο τὴν κίστην ἐμοί.

Λάμ.: ἄλας θυμίτας οἶσε παῖ καὶ κρόμμυα.

Δικ.: ἐμοὶ δὲ τεμάχη· κρομμύοις γὰρ ἄχθομαι. 1100

Λάμ.: θρῖον ταρίχους οἶσε δεῦρο παῖ σαπροῦ.

Δικ.: κἀμοὶ σὺ δημοῦ θρῖον· ὀπρήσω δ᾽ ἐκεῖ.

Λάμ.: ἔνεγκε δεῦρο τὼ πτερὼ τὼ κ᾽ τοῦ κράνους.

Δικ.: ἐμοὶ δὲ τὰς φάττας γε φέρε καὶ τὰς κίχλας.

Λάμ.: καλόν γε καὶ λευκὸν τὸ τῆς στρούθου πτερόν. 1105

Δικ.: καλόν γε καὶ ξανθὸν τὸ τῆς φάττης κρέας.

Λάμ.: ὦνθρωπε παῦσαι καταγελῶν μου τῶν ὅπλων.

Δικ.: ὦνθρωπε βούλει μὴ βλέπειν ἐς τὰς κίχλας; Λάμ.: τὸ λοφεῖον ἐξένεγκε τῶν τριῶν λόφων.

Δικ.: κἀμοὶ λεκάνιον τῶν λαγῳὼν δὸς κρεῶν. 1110

Λάμ.: ἀλλ᾽ ἢ τριχόβρωτες τοὺς λόφους που κατέφαγον.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ ἤ πρὸ δείπνου τὴν μίμαρκυν κατέδομαι.

Λάμ.: ὦνθρωπε βούλει μὴ προσαγορεύειν ἐμέ; Δικ.: οὐκ ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ χὠ παῖς ἐρίζομεν πάλαι.
βούλει περιδόσθαι κἀπιτρέψαι Λαμάχῳ, 1115
πότερον ἀκρίδες ἥδιόν ἐστιν ἢ κίχλαι; Λάμ.: οἴμ᾽ ὡς ὑβρίζεις.

Δικ.: τὰς ἀκρίδας κρίνει πολύ.

Λάμ.: παῖ παῖ καθελών μοι τὸ δόρυ δεῦρ᾽ ἔξω φέρε.

Δικ.: παῖ παῖ σὺ δ᾽ ἀφελὼν δεῦρο τὴν χορδὴν φέρε.

Λάμ.: φέρε τοῦ δόρατος ἀφελκύσωμαι τοὔλυτρον. 1120
ἔχ᾽, ἀντέχου παῖ.

Δικ.: καὶ σὺ παῖ τοῦδ᾽ ἀντέχου.

Λάμ.: τοὺς κιλλίβαντας οἶσε παῖ τῆς ἀσπίδος.

Δικ.: καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς τοὺς κριβανίτας ἔκφερε.

Λάμ.: φέρε δεῦρο γοργόνωτον ἀσπίδος κύκλον.

Δικ.: κἀμοὶ πλακοῦντος τυρόνωτον δὸς κύκλον. 1125

Λάμ.: ταῦτ᾽ οὐ κατάγελώς ἐστιν ἀνθρώποις πλατύς; Δικ.: ταῦτ᾽ οὐ πλακοῦς δῆτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἀνθρώποις γλυκύς; Λάμ.: κατάχει σὺ παῖ τοὔλαιον. ἐν τῷ χαλκίῳ ἐνορῶ γέροντα δειλίας φευξούμενον.

Δικ.: κατάχει σὺ τὸ μέλι. κἀνθάδ᾽ ἔνδηλος γέρων 1130
κλάειν κελεύων Λάμαχον τὸν Γοργάσου.

Λάμ.: φέρε δεῦρο παῖ θώρακα πολεμιστήριον.

Δικ.: ἔξαιρε παῖ θώρακα κἀμοὶ τὸν χοᾶ.

Λάμ.: ἐν τῷδε πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους θωρήξομαι.

Δικ.: ἐν τῷδε πρὸς τοὺς συμπότας θωρήξομαι.

Λάμ.: τὰ στρώματ᾽ ὦ παῖ δῆσον ἐκ τῆς ἀσπίδος.

Δικ.: τὸ δεῖπνον ὦ παῖ δῆσον ἐκ τῆς κιστίδος.

Λάμ.: ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐμαυτῷ τὸν γυλιὸν οἴσω λαβών.

Δικ.: ἐγὼ δὲ θοἰμάτιον λαβὼν ἐξέρχομαι.

Λάμ.: τὴν ἀσπίδ᾽ αἴρου καὶ βάδιζ᾽ ὦ παῖ λαβών.
νείφει. βαβαιάξ· χειμέρια τὰ πράγματα.

Δικ.: αἴρου τὸ δεῖπνον· συμποτικὰ τὰ πράγματα.

Χορ.: ἴτε δὴ χαίροντες ἐπὶ στρατιάν.
ὡς ἀνομοίαν ἔρχεσθον ὁδόν·
τῷ μὲν πίνειν στεφανωσαμένῳ,
σοὶ δὲ ῥιγῶν καὶ προφυλάττειν,
τῷ δὲ καθεύδειν
μετὰ παιδίσκης ὡραιοτάτης,
ἀνατριβομένῳ τε τὸ δεῖνα.

Ἀντίμαχον τὸν ψακάδος τὸν ξυγγραφῆ τὸν μελέων ποιητήν,
ὡς μὲν ἁπλῷ, κακῶς ἐξολέσειεν ὁ Ζεύς·
ὅς γ᾽ ἐμὲ τὸν τλήμονα Λήναια χορηγῶν ἀπέλυσ᾽ ἄδειπνον.
ὃν ἔτ᾽ ἐπίδοιμι τευθίδος
δεόμενον, ἡ δ᾽ ὠπτημένη
σίζουσα πάραλος ἐπὶ τραπέζῃ κειμένη
ὀκέλλοι· κᾆτα μέλλοντος
λαβεῖν αὐτοῦ κύων
ἁρπάσασα φεύγοι.

τοῦτο μὲν αὐτῷ κακὸν ἕν, κᾆθ᾽ ἕτερον νυκτερινὸν γένοιτο.
ἠπιαλῶν γὰρ οἴκαδ᾽ ἐξ ἱππασίας βαδίζων,
εἶτα κατάξειέ τις αὐτοῦ μεθύων τῆς κεφαλῆς Ὀρέστης
μαινόμενος· ὁ δὲ λίθον βαλεῖν
βουλόμενος ἐν σκότῳ λάβοι

τῇ χειρὶ πέλεθον ἀρτίως κεχεσμένον·
ἐπᾴξειεν δ᾽ ἔχων
τὸν μάρμαρον, κἄπειθ᾽ ἁμαρτὼν
βάλοι Κρατῖνον.
Θεράπων Λαμάχου
ὦ δμῶες οἳ κατ᾽ οἶκόν ἐστε Λαμάχου,
ὕδωρ ὕδωρ ἐν χυτριδίῳ θερμαίνετε·
ὀθόνια, κηρωτὴν παρασκευάζετε,
ἔρι᾽ οἰσυπηρά, λαμπάδιον περὶ τὸ σφυρόν.
ἀνὴρ τέτρωται χάρακι διαπηδῶν τάφρον,
καὶ τὸ σφυρὸν παλίνορρον ἐξεκόκκισεν,
καὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς κατέαγε περὶ λίθῳ πεσών,
καὶ Γοργόν᾽ ἐξήγειρεν ἐκ τῆς ἀσπίδος.
πτίλον δὲ τὸ μέγα κομπολακύθου πεσὸν
πρὸς ταῖς πέτραισι, δεινὸν ἐξηύδα μέλος·
᾽ὦ κλεινὸν ὄμμα νῦν πανύστατόν σ᾽ ἰδὼν
λείπω φάος γε τοὐμόν, οὐκέτ᾽ εἰμ᾽ ἐγώ.᾽
τοσαῦτα λέξας εἰς ὑδρορρόαν πεσὼν
ἀνίσταταί τε καὶ ξυναντᾷ δραπέταις
λῃστὰς ἐλαύνων καὶ κατασπέρχων δορί.
ὁδὶ δὲ καὐτός· ἀλλ᾽ ἄνοιγε τὴν θύραν.

Λάμ.: ἀτταταῖ ἀτταταῖ
στυγερὰ τάδε γε κρυερὰ πάθεα· τάλας ἐγώ.
διόλλυμαι δορὸς ὑπὸ πολεμίου τυπείς.
ἐκεῖνο δ᾽ οὖν αἰακτὸν ἂν γένοιτο,

Δικ.: εἴ μ᾽ ἴδοι τετρωμένον
κᾆτ᾽ ἐγχάνοι ταῖς ἐμαῖς τύχαισιν.

Δικ.: ἀτταταῖ ἀτταταῖ
τῶν τιτθίων, ὡς σκληρὰ καὶ κυδώνια.
φιλήσατόν με μαλθακῶς ὦ χρυσίω
τὸ περιπεταστὸν κἀπιμανδαλωτόν.
τὸν γὰρ χοᾶ πρῶτος ἐκπέπωκα.

Λάμ.: ὦ συμφορὰ τάλαινα τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.
ἰὼ ἰὼ τραυμάτων ἐπωδύνων.

Δικ.: ἰὴ ἰὴ χαῖρε Λαμαχίππιον.

Λάμ.: στυγερὸς ἐγώ.

Δικ.: τί με σὺ κυνεῖς; Λάμ.: μογερὸς ἐγώ.

Δικ.: τί με σὺ δάκνεις; Λάμ.: τάλας ἐγὼ ξυμβολῆς βαρείας.

Δικ.: τοῖς Χουσὶ γάρ τις ξυμβολὰς ἐπράττετο; Λάμ.: ἰὼ ἰὼ Παιὰν Παιάν.

Δικ.: ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ νυνὶ τήμερον Παιώνια.

Λάμ.: λάβεσθέ μου λάβεσθε τοῦ σκέλους παπαῖ,
προσλάβεσθ᾽ ὦ φίλοι.

Δικ.: ἐμοῦ δέ γε σφὼ τοῦ πέους ἄμφω μέσου
προσλάβεσθ᾽ ὦ φίλαι.

Λάμ.: εἰλιγγιῶ κάρα λίθῳ πεπληγμένος
καὶ σκοτοδινιῶ.

Δικ.: κἀγὼ καθεύδειν βούλομαι καὶ στύομαι
καὶ σκοτοβινιῶ

Λάμ.: θύραζέ μ᾽ ἐξενέγκατ᾽ ἐς τοῦ Πιττάλου
παιωνίαισι χερσίν.

Δικ.: ὡς τοὺς κριτάς με φέρετε· ποῦ ᾽στιν ὁ βασιλεύς;
ἀπόδοτέ μοι τὸν ἀσκόν.

Λάμ.: λόγχη τις ἐμπέπηγέ μοι δι᾽ ὀστέων ὀδυρτά.

Δικ.: ὁρᾶτε τουτονὶ κενόν. τήνελλα καλλίνικος.

Χορ.: τήνελλα δῆτ᾽, εἴπερ καλεῖς γ᾽, ὦ πρέσβυ, καλλίνικος.

Δικ.: καὶ πρός γ᾽ ἄκρατον ἐγχέας ἄμυστιν ἐξέλαψα.

Χορ.: τήνελλά νυν ὦ γεννάδα· χώρει λαβὼν τὸν ἀσκόν.

Δικ.: ἔπεσθέ νυν ᾄδοντες ὦ τήνελλα καλλίνικος.

Χορ.: ἀλλ᾽ ἐψόμεσθα σὴν χάριν
τήνελλα καλλίνικος ᾄδοντες
σὲ καὶ τὸν ἀσκόν.

THE KNIGHTS

Δημοσθένης
ἰατταταιὰξ τῶν κακῶν, ἰατταταῖ.
κακῶς Παφλαγόνα τὸν νεώνητον κακὸν
αὐταῖσι βουλαῖς ἀπολέσειαν οἱ θεοί.
ἐξ οὗ γὰρ εἰσήρρησεν ἐς τὴν οἰκίαν
πληγὰς ἀεὶ προστρίβεται τοῖς οἰκέταις. 5

Νικίας
κάκιστα δῆθ᾽οὗτός γε πρῶτος Παφλαγόνων
αὐταῖς διαβολαῖς.

Δημοσθένης
ὦ κακόδαιμον πῶς ἔχεις;

Νικίας
κακῶς καθάπερ σύ.

Δημοσθένης
δεῦρο δὴ πρόσελθ᾽, ἵνα
ξυναυλίαν κλαύσωμεν Οὐλύμπου νόμον.

Δημοσθένης καὶ Νικίας
μυμῦ μυμῦ μυμῦ μυμῦ μυμῦ μυμῦ. 10

Δημοσθένης
τί κινυρόμεθ᾽ἄλλως; οὐκ ἐχρῆν ζητεῖν τινα
σωτηρίαν νῷν, ἀλλὰ μὴ κλάειν ἔτι;

Νικίας
τίς οὖν γένοιτ᾽ἄν;

Δημοσθένης
λέγε σύ.

Νικίας
σὺ μὲν οὖν μοι λέγε,

ἵνα μὴ μάχωμαι. 14

Δημοσθένης
μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω ᾽γὼ μὲν οὔ.

Νικίας
πῶς ἂν σύ μοι λέξειας ἀμὲ χρὴ λέγειν; 16

Δημοσθένης
ἀλλ᾽εἰπὲ θαρρῶν, εἶτα κἀγὼ σοὶ φράσω. 15

Νικίας
ἀλλ᾽οὐκ ἔνι μοι τὸ θρέττε. πῶς ἂν οὖν ποτε 17
εἴποιμ᾽ἂν αὐτὸ δῆτα κομψευριπικῶς;

Δημοσθένης
μὴ ᾽μοί γε, μὴ ᾽μοί, μὴ διασκανδικίσῃς·
ἀλλ᾽εὑρέ τιν᾽ἀπόκινον ἀπὸ τοῦ δεσπότου. 20

Νικίας
λέγε δὴ μόλωμεν ξυνεχὲς ὠδὶ ξυλλαβών.

Δημοσθένης
καὶ δὴ λέγω μόλωμεν.

Νικίας
ἐξόπισθε νῦν
αὐτὸ φάθι τοῦ μόλωμεν.

Δημοσθένης
αὐτό.

Νικίας
πάνυ καλῶς.
ὥσπερ δεφόμενος νῦν ἀτρέμα πρῶτον λέγε
τὸ μόλωμεν, εἶτα δ᾽αὐτό, κᾆτ᾽ἐπάγων πυκνόν. 25

Δημοσθένης
μόλωμεν αὐτὸ μόλωμεν αὐτομολῶμεν.

Νικίας
ἦν
οὐχ ἡδύ;

Δημοσθένης
νὴ Δία· πλήν γε περὶ τῷ δέρματι
δέδοικα τουτονὶ τὸν οἰωνόν.

Νικίας
τί δαί;

Δημοσθένης
ὁτιὴ τὸ δέρμα δεφομένων ἀπέρχεται.

Νικίας
κράτιστα τοίνυν τῶν παρόντων ἐστὶ νῷν,
θεῶν ἰόντε προσπεσεῖν του πρὸς βρέτας.

Δημοσθένης
"ποῖον βρέτας;" ἐτεὸν ἡγεῖ γὰρ θεούς;

Νικίας
ἔγωγε.

Δημοσθένης
ποίῳ χρώμενος τεκμηρίῳ;

Νικίας
ὁτιὴ θεοῖσιν ἐχθρός εἰμ᾽. οὐκ εἰκότως;

Δημοσθένης
εὖ προσβιβάζεις μ᾽. ἀλλ᾽ἑτέρᾳ πῃ σκεπτέον.
βούλει τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῖς θεαταῖσιν φράσω;

Νικίας
οὐ χεῖρον· ἢν δ᾽αὐτοὺς παραιτησώμεθα,
ἐπίδηλον ἡμῖν τοῖς προσώποισιν ποιεῖν,
ἢν τοῖς ἔπεσι χαίρωσι καὶ τοῖς πράγμασιν.

Δημοσθένης

λέγοιμ᾽ ἂν ἤδη. νῷν γάρ ἐστι δεσπότης
ἄγροικος ὀργὴν κυαμοτρὼξ ἀκράχολος,
Δῆμος πυκνίτης, δύσκολον γερόντιον
ὑπόκωφον. οὗτος τῇ προτέρᾳ νουμηνίᾳ
ἐπρίατο δοῦλον, βυρσοδέψην Παφλαγόνα,
πανουργότατον καὶ διαβολώτατόν τινα.
οὗτος καταγνοὺς τοῦ γέροντος τοὺς τρόπους,
ὁ βυρσοπαφλαγών, ὑποπεσὼν τὸν δεσπότην
ἤκαλλ᾽ἐθώπευ᾽ἐκολάκευ᾽ἐξηπάτα
κοσκυλματίοις ἄκροισι τοιαυτὶ λέγων·
ὦ Δῆμε λοῦσαι πρῶτον ἐκδικάσας μίαν,
ἐνθοῦ ῥόφησον ἔντραγ᾽ἔχε τριώβολον.
βούλει παραθῶ σοι δόρπον; εἶτ᾽ἀναρπάσας
ὅ τι ἄν τις ἡμῶν σκευάσῃ, τῷ δεσπότῃ
Παφλαγὼν κεχάρισται τοῦτο. καὶ πρώην γ᾽ἐμοῦ
μᾶζαν μεμαχότος ἐν Πύλῳ Λακωνικήν,
πανουργότατά πως περιδραμὼν ὑφαρπάσας
αὐτὸς παρέθηκε τὴν ὑπ᾽ἐμοῦ μεμαγμένην,
ἡμᾶς δ᾽ἀπελαύνει κοὐκ ἐᾷ τὸν δεσπότην
ἄλλον θεραπεύειν, ἀλλὰ βυρσίνην ἔχων
δειπνοῦντος ἑστὼς ἀποσοβεῖ τοὺς ῥήτορας.
ᾄδει δὲ χρησμούς· ὁ δὲ γέρων σιβυλλιᾷ.
ὁ δ᾽αὐτὸν ὡς ὁρᾷ μεμακκοακότα,
τέχνην πεποίηται. τοὺς γὰρ ἔνδον ἄντικρυς
ψευδῆ διαβάλλει· κᾆτα μαστιγούμεθα
ἡμεῖς· Παφλαγὼν δὲ περιθέων τοὺς οἰκέτας
αἰτεῖ ταράττει δωροδοκεῖ λέγων τάδε·
“ὁρᾶτε τὸν Ὕλαν δι᾽ἐμὲ μαστιγούμενον;
εἰ μή μ᾽ἀναπείσετ᾽, ἀποθανεῖσθε τήμερον”.
ἡμεῖς δὲ δίδομεν· εἰ δὲ μή, πατούμενοι
ὑπὸ τοῦ γέροντος ὀκταπλάσιον χέζομεν.
νῦν οὖν ἀνύσαντε φροντίσωμεν ὦγαθέ,
ποίαν ὁδὸν νὼ τρεπτέον καὶ πρὸς τίνα.

Νικίας
κράτιστ᾽ἐκείνην τὴν μόλωμεν ὦγαθέ.

Δημοσθένης
ἀλλ᾽οὐχ οἷόν τε τὸν Παφλαγόν᾽οὐδὲν λαθεῖν·
ἐφορᾷ γὰρ οὗτος πάντ᾽. ἔχει γὰρ τὸ σκέλος
τὸ μὲν ἐν Πύλῳ, τὸ δ᾽ἕτερον ἐν τῇκκλησίᾳ.
τοσόνδε δ᾽αὐτοῦ βῆμα διαβεβηκότος
ὁ πρωκτός ἐστιν αὐτόχρημ᾽ἐν Χάοσιν,
τὼ χεῖρ᾽ἐν Αἰτωλοῖς, ὁ νοῦς δ᾽ἐν Κλωπιδῶν.

Νικίας
κράτιστον οὖν νῷν ἀποθανεῖν.

Δημοσθένης
ἀλλὰ σκόπει,
ὅπως ἂν ἀποθάνοιμεν ἀνδρικώτατα.

Νικίας
πῶς δῆτα πῶς γένοιτ᾽ἂν ἀνδρικώτατα;
βέλτιστον ἡμῖν αἷμα ταύρειον πιεῖν.
ὁ Θεμιστοκλέους γὰρ θάνατος αἱρετώτερος.

Δημοσθένης
μὰ Δί᾽ἀλλ᾽ἄκρατον οἶνον ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος.
ἴσως γὰρ ἂν χρηστόν τι βουλευσαίμεθα.

Νικίας
ἰδού γ᾽ἄκρατον. περὶ πότου γοῦν ἐστί σοι;
πῶς δ᾽ἂν μεθύων χρηστόν τι βουλεύσαιτ᾽ἀνήρ;

Δημοσθένης
ἄληθες οὗτος; κρουνοχυτρολήραιον εἶ.
οἶνον σὺ τολμᾷς εἰς ἐπίνοιαν λοιδορεῖν;
οἴνου γὰρ εὕροις ἄν τι πρακτικώτερον;
ὁρᾷς, ὅταν πίνωσιν ἄνθρωποι τότε
πλουτοῦσι διαπράττουσι νικῶσιν δίκας
εὐδαιμονοῦσιν ὠφελοῦσι τοὺς φίλους.
ἀλλ᾽ἐξένεγκέ μοι ταχέως οἴνου χοᾶ,
τὸν νοῦν ἵν᾽ἄρδω καὶ λέγω τι δεξιόν.

Νικίας

οἴμοι τί ποθ᾽ ἡμᾶς ἐργάσει τῷ σῷ πότῳ;

Δημοσθένης
ἀγάθ᾽· ἀλλ᾽ἔνεγκ᾽· ἐγὼ δὲ κατακλινήσομαι.
ἢν γὰρ μεθυσθῶ, πάντα ταυτὶ καταπάσω
βουλευματίων καὶ γνωμιδίων καὶ νοιδίων.

Νικίας
ὡς εὐτυχῶς ὅτι οὐκ ἐλήφθην ἔνδοθεν
κλέπτων τὸν οἶνον.

Δημοσθένης
εἰπέ μοι Παφλαγὼν τί δρᾷ;

Νικίας
ἐπίπαστα λείξας δημιόπραθ᾽ὁ βάσκανος
ῥέγκει μεθύων ἐν ταῖσι βύρσαις ὕπτιος.

Δημοσθένης
ἴθι νυν ἄκρατον ἐγκάναξόν μοι πολὺν
σπονδήν.

Νικίας
λαβὲ δὴ καὶ σπεῖσον ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος.

Δημοσθένης
ἕλχ᾽ἕλκε τὴν τοῦ δαίμονος τοῦ Πραμνίου.
ὦ δαῖμον ἀγαθὲ σὸν τὸ βούλευμ᾽, οὐκ ἐμόν.

Νικίας
εἶπ᾽, ἀντιβολῶ, τί ἔστι;

Δημοσθένης
τοὺς χρησμοὺς ταχὺ
κλέψας ἔνεγκε τοῦ Παφλαγόνος ἔνδοθεν,
ἕως καθεύδει.

Νικίας

ταῦτ᾽. ἀτὰρ τοῦ δαίμονος
δέδοιχ᾽ὅπως μὴ τεύξομαι κακοδαίμονος.

Δημοσθένης
φέρε νυν ἐγὼ μ᾽αὐτῷ προσαγάγω τὸν χοᾶ.
τὸν νοῦν ἵν᾽ἄρδω καὶ λέγω τι δεξιόν.

Νικίας
ὡς μεγάλ᾽ὁ Παφλαγὼν πέρδεται καὶ ῥέγκεται,
ὥστ᾽ἔλαθον αὐτὸν τὸν ἱερὸν χρησμὸν λαβών,
ὅνπερ μάλιστ᾽ἐφύλαττεν.

Δημοσθένης
ὦ σοφώτατε.
φέρ᾽αὐτὸν ἵν᾽ἀναγνῶ· σὺ δ᾽ἔγχεον πιεῖν
ἀνύσας τι. φέρ᾽ἴδω τί ἄρ᾽ἔνεστιν αὐτόθι.
ὦ λόγια. δός μοι δὸς τὸ ποτήριον ταχύ.

Νικίας
ἰδού. τί φησ᾽ὁ χρησμός;

Δημοσθένης
ἑτέραν ἔγχεον.

Νικίας
ἐν τοῖς λογίοις ἔνεστιν "ἑτέραν ἔγχεον;"

Δημοσθένης
ὦ Βάκι.

Νικίας
τί ἔστι;

Δημοσθένης
δὸς τὸ ποτήριον ταχύ.

Νικίας
πολλῷ γ᾽ὁ Βάκις ἐχρῆτο τῷ ποτηρίῳ.

Δημοσθένης

ὦ μιαρὲ Παφλαγὼν ταῦτ᾽ἄρ᾽ἐφυλάττου πάλαι,
τὸν περὶ σεαυτοῦ χρησμὸν ὀρρωδῶν;

Νικίας
τιή;

Δημοσθένης
ἐνταῦθ᾽ἔνεστιν, αὐτὸς ὡς ἀπόλλυται.

Νικίας
καὶ πῶς;

Δημοσθένης
ὅπως; ὁ χρησμὸς ἄντικρυς λέγει
ὡς πρῶτα μὲν στυππειοπώλης γίγνεται,
ὃς πρῶτος ἕξει τῆς πόλεως τὰ πράγματα.

Νικίας
εἶς οὑτοσὶ πώλης. τί τοὐντεῦθεν; λέγε.

Δημοσθένης
μετὰ τοῦτον αὖθις προβατοπώλης δεύτερος.

Νικίας
δύο τώδε πώλα. καὶ τί τόνδε χρὴ παθεῖν;

Δημοσθένης
κρατεῖν, ἕως ἕτερος ἀνὴρ βδελυρώτερος
αὐτοῦ γένοιτο· μετὰ δὲ ταῦτ᾽ἀπόλλυται.
ἐπιγίγνεται γὰρ βυρσοπώλης ὁ Παφλαγών,
ἅρπαξ κεκράκτης Κυκλοβόρου φωνὴν ἔχων.

Νικίας
τὸν προβατοπώλην ἦν ἄρ᾽ἀπολέσθαι χρεὼν
ὑπὸ βυρσοπώλου;

Δημοσθένης
νὴ Δί᾽.

Νικίας

οἴμοι δείλαιος.
πόθεν οὖν ἂν ἔτι γένοιτο πώλης εἷς μόνος;

Δημοσθένης
ἔτ᾽ἐστὶν εἷς ὑπερφυᾶ τέχνην ἔχων.

Νικίας
εἴπ᾽, ἀντιβολῶ, τίς ἐστιν;

Δημοσθένης
εἴπω;

Νικίας
νὴ Δία.

Δημοσθένης
ἀλλαντοπώλης ἔσθ᾽ὁ τοῦτον ἐξολῶν.

Νικίας
ἀλλαντοπώλης; ὦ Πόσειδον τῆς τέχνης.
φέρε ποῦ τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον ἐξευρήσομεν;

Δημοσθένης
ζητῶμεν αὐτόν.

Νικίας
ἀλλ᾽ὁδὶ προσέρχεται
ὥσπερ κατὰ θεὸν εἰς ἀγοράν.

Δημοσθένης
ὦ μακάριε
ἀλλαντοπῶλα, δεῦρο δεῦρ᾽ὦ φίλτατε
ἀνάβαινε σωτὴρ τῇ πόλει καὶ νῷν φανείς.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τί ἔστι; τί με καλεῖτε;

Δημοσθένης

δεῦρ᾽ ἔλθ᾽, ἵνα πύθῃ
ὡς εὐτυχὴς εἶ καὶ μεγάλως εὐδαιμονεῖς.

Νικίας
ἴθι δὴ κάθελ᾽ αὐτοῦ τοὐλεὸν καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ
τὸν χρησμὸν ἀναδίδαξον αὐτὸν ὡς ἔχει·
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἰὼν προσκέψομαι τὸν Παφλαγόνα.

Δημοσθένης
ἄγε δὴ σὺ κατάθου πρῶτα τὰ σκεύη χαμαί· 155
ἔπειτα τὴν γῆν πρόσκυσον καὶ τοὺς θεούς.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἰδού· τί ἔστιν;

Δημοσθένης
ὦ μακάρι᾽ ὦ πλούσιε,
ὦ νῦν μὲν οὐδεὶς αὖριον δ᾽ ὑπέρμεγας,
ὦ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν ταγὲ τῶν εὐδαιμόνων.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τί μ᾽ ὦγάθ᾽ οὐ πλύνειν ἐᾷς τὰς κοιλίας 160
πωλεῖν τε τοὺς ἀλλᾶντας, ἀλλὰ καταγελᾷς;

Δημοσθένης
ὦ μῶρε ποίας κοιλίας; δευρὶ βλέπε.
τὰς στίχας ὁρᾷς τὰς τῶνδε τῶν λαῶν;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὁρῶ.

Δημοσθένης
τούτων ἁπάντων αὐτὸς ἀρχέλας ἔσει,
καὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς καὶ τῶν λιμένων καὶ τῆς πυκνός· 165
βουλὴν πατήσεις καὶ στρατηγοὺς κλαστάσεις,
δήσεις φυλάξεις, ἐν πρυτανείῳ λαικάσει.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐγώ;

Δημοσθένης
σὺ μέντοι· κοὐδέπω γε πάνθ᾽ ὁρᾷς.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπανάβηθι κἀπὶ τοὐλεὸν τοδὶ
καὶ κάτιδε τὰς νήσους ἁπάσας ἐν κύκλῳ. 170

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καθορῶ.

Δημοσθένης
τί δαί; τἀμπόρια καὶ τὰς ὁλκάδας;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἔγωγε.

Δημοσθένης
πῶς οὖν οὐ μεγάλως εὐδαιμονεῖς;
ἔτι νῦν τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν παράβαλλ᾽ ἐς Καρίαν
τὸν δεξιόν, τὸν δ᾽ ἕτερον ἐς Καρχηδόνα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
εὐδαιμονήσω δ᾽ εἰ διαστραφήσομαι; 175

Δημοσθένης
οὐκ ἀλλὰ διὰ σοῦ ταῦτα πάντα πέρναται.
γίγνει γάρ, ὡς ὁ χρησμὸς οὑτοσὶ λέγει,
ἀνὴρ μέγιστος.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
εἰπέ μοι καὶ πῶς ἐγὼ
ἀλλαντοπώλης ὢν ἀνὴρ γενήσομαι;

Δημοσθένης
δι᾽ αὐτὸ γάρ τοι τοῦτο καὶ γίγνει μέγας, 180
ὁτιὴ πονηρὸς κἀξ ἀγορᾶς εἶ καὶ θρασύς.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὐκ ἀξιῶ ᾽γὼ ᾽μαυτὸν ἰσχύειν μέγα.

Δημοσθένης

οἴμοι τί ποτ᾽ἔσθ᾽ὅτι σαυτὸν οὐ φῂς ἄξιον;
ξυνειδέναι τί μοι δοκεῖς σαυτῷ καλόν.
μῶν ἐκ καλῶν εἶ κἀγαθῶν;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς
εἰ μὴ ᾽κ πονηρῶν γ᾽.

Δημοσθένης
ὦ μακάριε τῆς τύχης
ὅσον πέπονθας ἀγαθὸν ἐς τὰ πράγματα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἀλλ᾽ὦγάθ᾽οὐδὲ μουσικὴν ἐπίσταμαι
πλὴν γραμμάτων, καὶ ταῦτα μέντοι κακὰ κακῶς.

Δημοσθένης
τουτὶ μόνον σ᾽ἔβλαψεν, ὅτι καὶ κακὰ κακῶς.
ἡ δημαγωγία γὰρ οὐ πρὸς μουσικοῦ
ἔτ᾽ἐστὶν ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ χρηστοῦ τοὺς τρόπους,
ἀλλ᾽εἰς ἀμαθῆ καὶ βδελυρόν. ἀλλὰ μὴ παρῇς
ἅ σοι διδόασ᾽ἐν τοῖς λογίοισιν οἱ θεοί.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
πῶς δῆτά φησ᾽ὁ χρησμός;

Δημοσθένης
εὖ νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς
καὶ ποικίλως πως καὶ σοφῶς ᾐνιγμένος·
ἀλλ᾽ὁπόταν μάρψῃ βυρσαίετος ἀγκυλοχήλης
γαμφηλῇσι δράκοντα κοάλεμον αἱματοπώτην,
δὴ τότε Παφλαγόνων μὲν ἀπόλλυται ἡ σκοροδάλμη,
κοιλιοπώλῃσιν δὲ θεὸς μέγα κῦδος ὀπάζει,
αἵ κεν μὴ πωλεῖν ἀλλᾶντας μᾶλλον ἕλωνται.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
πῶς οὖν πρὸς ἐμὲ ταῦτ᾽ἐστίν; ἀναδίδασκέ με.

Δημοσθένης
βυρσαίετος μὲν ὁ Παφλαγών ἐσθ᾽ οὑτοσί.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τί δ᾽ ἀγκυλοχήλης ἐστίν;

Δημοσθένης
αὐτό που λέγει,
ὅτι ἀγκύλαις ταῖς χερσὶν ἁρπάζων φέρει.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὁ δράκων δὲ πρὸς τί;

Δημοσθένης
τοῦτο περιφανέστατον.
ὁ δράκων γάρ ἐστι μακρὸν ὅ τ᾽ ἀλλᾶς αὖ μακρόν.
εἶθ᾽ αἱματοπώτης ἔσθ᾽ ὅ τ᾽ ἀλλᾶς χὠ δράκων·
τὸν οὖν δράκοντά φησι τὸν βυρσαίετον
ἤδη κρατήσειν, αἴ κε μὴ θαλφθῇ λόγοις.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τὰ μὲν λόγι᾽ αἰκάλλει με· θαυμάζω δ᾽ ὅπως
τὸν δῆμον οἷός τ᾽ ἐπιτροπεύειν εἶμ᾽ ἐγώ.

Δημοσθένης
φαυλότατον ἔργον· ταῦθ᾽ ἅπερ ποιεῖς ποίει·
τάραττε καὶ χόρδευ᾽ ὁμοῦ τὰ πράγματα
ἅπαντα, καὶ τὸν δῆμον ἀεὶ προσποιοῦ
ὑπογλυκαίνων ῥηματίοις μαγειρικοῖς.
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα σοι πρόσεστι δημαγωγικά,
φωνὴ μιαρά, γέγονας κακῶς, ἀγοραῖος εἶ·
ἔχεις ἅπαντα πρὸς πολιτείαν ἃ δεῖ·
χρησμοί τε συμβαίνουσι καὶ τὸ Πυθικόν.
ἀλλὰ στεφανοῦ καὶ σπένδε τῷ Κοαλέμῳ·
χὤπως ἀμυνεῖ τὸν ἄνδρα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ τίς ξύμμαχος
γενήσεταί μοι; καὶ γὰρ οἵ τε πλούσιοι

δεδίασιν αὐτὸν ὅ τε πένης βδύλλει λεώς.

Δημοσθένης
ἀλλ᾽εἰσὶν ἱππῆς ἄνδρες ἀγαθοὶ χίλιοι
μισοῦντες αὐτόν, οἳ βοηθήσουσί σοι,
καὶ τῶν πολιτῶν οἱ καλοί τε κἀγαθοί,
καὶ τῶν θεατῶν ὅστις ἐστὶ δεξιός,
κἀγὼ μετ᾽αὐτῶν χὠ θεὸς ξυλλήψεται.
καὶ μὴ δέδιθ᾽· οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἐξηκασμένος,
ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους γὰρ αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἤθελεν
τῶν σκευοποιῶν εἰκάσαι. πάντως γε μὴν
γνωσθήσεται· τὸ γὰρ θέατρον δεξιόν.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οἴμοι κακοδαίμων ὁ Παφλαγὼν ἐξέρχεται.

Κλέων
οὗτοι μὰ τοὺς δώδεκα θεοὺς χαιρήσετον,
ὁτιὴ ᾽πὶ τῷ δήμῳ ξυνόμνυτον πάλαι.
τουτὶ τί δρᾷ τὸ Χαλκιδικὸν ποτήριον;
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ὅπως οὐ Χαλκιδέας ἀφίστατον.
ἀπολεῖσθον ἀποθανεῖσθον ὦ μιαρωτάτω.

Δημοσθένης
οὗτος τί φεύγεις; οὐ μενεῖς; ὦ γεννάδα
ἀλλαντοπῶλα μὴ προδῷς τὰ πράγματα.
ἄνδρες ἱππῆς παραγένεσθε· νῦν ὁ καιρός. ὦ Σίμων,
ὦ Παναίτι᾽οὐκ ἐλᾶτε πρὸς τὸ δεξιὸν κέρας;
ἄνδρες ἐγγύς. ἀλλ᾽ἀμύνου κἀπαναστρέφου πάλιν.
ὁ κονιορτὸς δῆλος αὐτῶν ὡς ὁμοῦ προσκειμένων.
ἀλλ᾽ἀμύνου καὶ δίωκε καὶ τροπὴν αὐτοῦ ποιοῦ.

Χορός Ἱππεῶν
παῖε παῖε τὸν πανοῦργον καὶ ταραξιππόστρατον
καὶ τελώνην καὶ φάραγγα καὶ Χάρυβδιν ἁρπαγῆς,
καὶ πανοῦργον καὶ πανοῦργον· πολλάκις γὰρ αὖτ᾽ἐρῶ.
καὶ γὰρ οὗτος ἦν πανοῦργος πολλάκις τῆς ἡμέρας.
ἀλλὰ παῖε καὶ δίωκε καὶ τάραττε καὶ κύκα
καὶ βδελύττου, καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς, κἀπικείμενος βόα·

εὐλαβοῦ δὲ μὴ ᾽κφύγῃ σε· καὶ γὰρ οἶδε τὰς ὁδούς,
ἅσπερ Εὐκράτης ἔφευγεν εὐθὺ τῶν κυρηβίων.

Κλέων
ὦ γέροντες ἡλιασταί, φράτερες τριωβόλου,
οὓς ἐγὼ βόσκω κεκραγὼς καὶ δίκαια κἄδικα,
παραβοηθεῖθ᾽, ὡς ὑπ᾽ἀνδρῶν τύπτομαι ξυνωμοτῶν.

Χορός
ἐν δίκῃ γ᾽, ἐπεὶ τὰ κοινὰ πρὶν λαχεῖν κατεσθίεις,
κἀποσυκάζεις πιέζων τοὺς ὑπευθύνους σκοπῶν,
ὅστις αὐτῶν ὠμός ἐστιν ἢ πέπων ἢ μὴ πέπων,
κἄν τιν᾽αὐτῶν γνῷς ἀπράγμον᾽ὄντα καὶ κεχηνότα,
καταγαγὼν ἐκ Χερρονήσου διαβαλὼν ἀγκυρίσας
εἶτ᾽ἀποστρέψας τὸν ὦμον αὐτὸν ἐνεκολήβασας·
καὶ σκοπεῖς γε τῶν πολιτῶν ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀμνοκῶν,
πλούσιος καὶ μὴ πονηρὸς καὶ τρέμων τὰ πράγματα.

Κλέων
ξυνεπίκεισθ᾽ὑμεῖς; ἐγὼ δ᾽ἄνδρες δι᾽ὑμᾶς τύπτομαι,
ὅτι λέγειν γνώμην ἔμελλον ὡς δίκαιον ἐν πόλει
ἑστάναι μνημεῖον ὑμῶν ἐστιν ἀνδρείας χάριν.

Χορός
ὡς δ᾽ἀλαζών, ὡς δὲ μάσθλης· εἶδες οἷ᾽ὑπέρχεται
ὥσπερεὶ γέροντας ἡμᾶς καὶ κοβαλικεύεται;
ἀλλ᾽ἐὰν ταύτῃ γε νικᾷ, ταυτῃὶ πεπλήξεται·
ἢν δ᾽ὑπεκκλίνῃ γε δευρί, τὸ σκέλος κυρηβάσει.

Κλέων
ὦ πόλις καὶ δῆμ᾽ὑφ᾽οἵων θηρίων γαστρίζομαι.

Χορός
καὶ κέκραγας, ὥσπερ ἀεὶ τὴν πόλιν καταστρέφει;

Κλέων
ἀλλ᾽ἐγώ σε τῇ βοῇ ταύτῃ γε πρῶτα τρέψομαι.

Χορός
ἀλλ᾽ἐὰν μέντοι γε νικᾷς τῇ βοῇ, τήνελλος εἶ·
ἢν δ᾽ἀναιδείᾳ παρέλθῃ σ᾽, ἡμέτερος ὁ πυραμοῦς.

Κλέων
τουτονὶ τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ἐγὼ ᾽νδείκνυμι, καὶ φήμ᾽ἐξάγειν
ταῖσι Πελοποννησίων τριήρεσι ζωμεύματα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ναὶ μὰ Δία κἄγωγε τοῦτον, ὅτι κενῇ τῇ κοιλίᾳ
ἐσδραμὼν ἐς τὸ πρυτανεῖον, εἶτα πάλιν ἐκθεῖ πλέᾳ.

Δημοσθένης
νὴ Δί᾽ἐξάγων γε τἀπόρρηθ᾽, ἅμ᾽ἄρτον καὶ κρέας
καὶ τέμαχος, οὗ Περικλέης οὐκ ἠξιώθη πώποτε.

Κλέων
ἀποθανεῖσθον αὐτίκα μάλα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τριπλάσιον κεκράξομαί σου.

Κλέων
καταβοήσομαι βοῶν σε.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
κατακεκράξομαί σε κράζων.

Κλέων
διαβαλῶ σ᾽ἐὰν στρατηγῇς.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
κυνοκοπήσω σου τὸ νῶτον.

Κλέων
περιελῶ σ᾽ἀλαζονείαις.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὑποτεμοῦμαι τὰς ὁδούς σου.

Κλέων
βλέψον ἔς μ᾽ἀσκαρδάμυκτος.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐν ἀγορᾷ κἀγὼ τέθραμμαι.

Κλέων
διαφορήσω σ᾽εἴ τι γρύξει.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
κοπροφορήσω σ᾽εἰ λαλήσεις.

Κλέων
ὁμολογῶ κλέπτειν· σὺ δ᾽οὐχί.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
νὴ τὸν Ἑρμῆν τὸν ἀγοραῖον,
κἀπιορκῶ γε βλεπόντων.

Κλέων
ἀλλότρια τοίνυν σοφίζει,
καὶ φανῶ σε τοῖς πρυτάνεσιν
ἀδεκατεύτους τῶν θεῶν ἱερὰς
χοντα κοιλίας.

Χορός
ὦ μιαρὲ καὶ βδελυρὲ "καὶ κεκράκτα", τοῦ σοῦ θράσους
πᾶσα μὲν γῆ πλέα, πᾶσα δ᾽ἐκκλησία, καὶ τέλη
καὶ γραφαὶ καὶ δικαστήρι᾽, ὦ βορβοροτάραξι καὶ
τὴν πόλιν ἅπασαν ἡμῶν ἀνατετυρβακώς,
ὅστις ἡμῶν τὰς Ἀθήνας ἐκκεκώφωκας βοῶν,
κἀπὸ τῶν πετρῶν ἄνωθεν τοὺς φόρους θυννοσκοπῶν.

Κλέων
οἶδ᾽ἐγὼ τὸ πρᾶγμα τοὔθ᾽ὅθεν πάλαι καττύεται.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης

εἰ δὲ μὴ σύ γ᾽ οἶσθα κάττυμ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ἐγὼ χορδεύματα,
ὅστις ὑποτέμνων ἐπώλεις δέρμα μοχθηροῦ βοὸς
τοῖς ἀγροίκοισιν πανούργως, ὥστε φαίνεσθαι παχύ,
καὶ πρὶν ἡμέραν φορῆσαι μεῖζον ἦν δυοῖν δοχμαῖν.

Δημοσθένης
νὴ Δία κἀμὲ τοῦτ᾽ ἔδρασε ταὐτόν, ὥστε κατάγελων
πάμπολυν τοῖς δημόταισι καὶ φίλοις παρασχεθεῖν·
πρὶν γὰρ εἶναι Περγασῆσιν ἔνεον ἐν ταῖς ἐμβάσιν.

Χορός
ἆρα δῆτ᾽ οὐκ ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς ἐδήλους ἀναίδειαν,
ἥπερ μόνη προστατεῖ ῥητόρων;
ἦ σὺ πιστεύων ἀμέλγεις τῶν ξένων τοὺς καρπίμους,
πρῶτος ὤν· ὁ δ᾽ Ἱπποδάμου λείβεται θεώμενος.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐφάνη γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἕτερος πολὺ
σοῦ μιαρώτερος, ὥστε με χαίρειν,
ὅς σε παύσει καὶ πάρεισι, δῆλός ἐστιν αὐτόθεν,
πανουργίᾳ τε καὶ θράσει
καὶ κοβαλικεύμασιν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ τραφεὶς ὅθενπέρ εἰσιν ἄνδρες οἵπερ εἰσίν,
νῦν δεῖξον ὡς οὐδὲν λέγει τὸ σωφρόνως τραφῆναι.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ μὴν ἀκούσαθ᾽ οἷός ἐστιν οὑτοσὶ πολίτης.

Κλέων
οὐκ αὖ μ᾽ ἐάσεις;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
μὰ Δί᾽ ἐπεὶ κἀγὼ πονηρός εἰμι.

Χορός
ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ταύτῃ γ᾽ ὑπείκῃ, λέγ᾽ ὅτι κἀκ πονηρῶν.

Κλέων
οὐκ αὖ μ᾽ ἐάσεις;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης

μὰ Δία.

Κλέων
ναὶ μὰ Δία.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ.
ἀλλ᾽αὐτὸ περὶ τοῦ πρότερος εἰπεῖν πρῶτα διαμαχοῦμαι.

Κλέων
οἴμοι διαρραγήσομαι. 340

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ οὐ παρήσω.

Χορός
πάρες πάρες πρὸς τῶν θεῶν αὐτῷ διαρραγῆναι.

Κλέων
τῷ καὶ πεποιθὼς ἀξιοῖς ἐμοῦ λέγειν ἔναντα;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὁτιὴ λέγειν οἷός τε κἀγὼ καὶ καρυκοποιεῖν.

Κλέων
ἰδοὺ λέγειν. καλῶς γ᾽ἂν οὖν σὺ πρᾶγμα προσπεσόν σοι
ὠμοσπάρακτον παραλαβὼν μεταχειρίσαιο χρηστῶς. 345
ἀλλ᾽οἶσθ᾽ὅπερ πεπονθέναι δοκεῖς; ὅπερ τὸ πλῆθος.
εἴ που δικίδιον εἶπας εὖ κατὰ ξένου μετοίκου,
τὴν νύκτα θρυλῶν καὶ λαλῶν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς σεαυτῷ,
ὕδωρ τε πίνων κἀπιδεικνὺς τοὺς φίλους τ᾽ἀνιῶν,
ᾧου δυνατὸς εἶναι λέγειν. ὦ μῶρε τῆς ἀνοίας. 350

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τί δαὶ σὺ πίνων τὴν πόλιν πεποίηκας, ὥστε νυνὶ
ὑπὸ σοῦ μονωτάτου κατεγλωττισμένην σιωπᾶν;

Κλέων
ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἀντέθηκας ἀνθρώπων τίν᾽; ὅστις εὐθὺς
θύννεια θερμὰ καταφαγών, κᾆτ᾽ἐπιπιὼν ἀκράτου

οἴνου χοᾶ κασαλβάσω τοὺς ἐν Πύλῳ στρατηγούς.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ ἤνυστρον βοὸς καὶ κοιλίαν ὑείαν
καταβροχθίσας κᾆτ᾽ ἐπιπιὼν τὸν ζωμὸν ἀναπόνιπτος
λαρυγγιῶ τοὺς ῥήτορας καὶ Νικίαν ταράξω.

Χορός
τὰ μὲν ἄλλα μ᾽ ἤρεσας λέγων·. ἢν δ᾽ οὐ προσίεταί με,
τῶν πραγμάτων ὁτιὴ μόνος τὸν ζωμὸν ἐκροφήσει.

Κλέων
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ λάβρακας καταφαγὼν Μιλησίους κλονήσεις.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἀλλὰ σχελίδας ἐδηδοκὼς ὠνήσομαι μέταλλα.

Κλέων
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐπεσπηδῶν γε τὴν βουλὴν βίᾳ κυκήσω.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐγὼ δὲ κινήσω γέ σου τὸν πρωκτὸν ἀντὶ φύσκης.

Κλέων
ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ ἐξέλξω σε τῆς πυγῆς θύραζε κύβδα.

Χορός
νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ κἀμέ τἄρ᾽, ἥνπερ γε τοῦτον ἕλκῃς.

Κλέων
οἷόν σε δήσω <᾽ν> τῷ ξύλῳ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
διώξομαί σε δειλίας.

Κλέων
ἡ βύρσα σου θρανεύσεται.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
δερῶ σε θύλακον κλοπῆς.

Κλέων
διαπατταλευθήσει χαμαί.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
περικόμματ᾽ἔκ σου σκευάσω.

Κλέων
τὰς βλεφαρίδας σου παρατιλῶ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τὸν πρηγορεῶνά σοὐκτεμῶ.

Δημοσθένης
καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ἐμβαλόντες αὐτῷ
πάτταλον μαγειρικῶς
ἐς τὸ στόμ᾽, εἶτα δ᾽ἔνδοθεν
τὴν γλῶτταν ἐξείραντες αὐτοῦ
σκεψόμεσθ᾽εὖ κἀνδρικῶς
κεχηνότος
τὸν πρωκτὸν εἰ χαλαζᾷ.

Χορός
ἦν ἄρα πυρός γ᾽ἕτερα θερμότερα καὶ λόγων
ἐν πόλει τῶν ἀναιδῶν ἀναιδέστεροι· καὶ τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽
ἦν ἄρ᾽οὐ φαῦλον ὦδ᾽. . . ἀλλ᾽ἔπιθι καὶ στρόβει,
μηδὲν ὀλίγον ποίει. νῦν γὰρ ἔχεται μέσος·
ὡς ἐὰν νυνὶ μαλάξῃς αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ προσβολῇ,
δειλὸν εὑρήσεις· ἐγὼ γὰρ τοὺς τρόπους ἐπίσταμαι.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἀλλ᾽ὅμως οὗτος τοιοῦτος ὢν ἅπαντα τὸν βίον,
κᾆτ᾽ἀνὴρ ἔδοξεν εἶναι, τἀλλότριον ἀμῶν θέρος.
νῦν δὲ τοὺς στάχυς ἐκείνους, οὓς ἐκεῖθεν ἤγαγεν,
ἐν ξύλῳ δήσας ἀφαύει κἀποδόσθαι βούλεται.

Κλέων

οὐ δέδοιχ᾽ ὑμᾶς, ἕως ἂν ζῇ τὸ βουλευτήριον
καὶ τὸ τοῦ δήμου πρόσωπον μακκοᾷ καθήμενον.

Χορός
ὡς δὲ πρὸς πᾶν ἀναιδεύεται κοὐ μεθίστησι
τοῦ χρώματος τοῦ παρεστηκότος.
εἴ σε μὴ μισῶ, γενοίμην ἐν Κρατίνου κῴδιον,
καὶ διδασκοίμην προσᾴδειν Μορσίμου τραγῳδίᾳ.
ᾧ περὶ πάντ᾽ἐπὶ πᾶσί τε πράγμασι
δωροδόκοισιν ἐπ᾽ἄνθεσιν ἴζων,
εἴθε φαύλως ὥσπερ ηὖρες ἐκβάλοις τὴν ἔνθεσιν.
ᾄσαιμι γὰρ τότ᾽ἂν μόνον,
"πῖνε πῖν᾽ἐπὶ συμφοραῖς".
τὸν Ἰουλίου τ᾽ἂν οἴομαι γέροντα πυροπίπην
ἡσθέντ᾽ἰηπαιωνίσαι καὶ βακχέβακχον ᾆσαι.

Κλέων
οὗτοί μ᾽ὑπερβαλεῖσθ᾽ἀναιδείᾳ μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ,
ἢ μή ποτ᾽ἀγοραίου Διὸς σπλάλχνοισι παραγενοίμην.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἔγωγε νὴ τοὺς κονδύλους οὓς πολλὰ δὴ ᾽πὶ πολλοῖς
ἠνεσχόμην ἐκ παιδίων, μαχαιρίδων τε πληγάς,
ὑπερβαλεῖσθαί σ᾽οἴομαι τούτοισιν, ἢ μάτην γ᾽ἂν
ἀπομαγδαλιὰς σιτούμενος τοσοῦτος ἐκτραφείην.

Κλέων
ἀπομαγδαλιὰς ὥσπερ κύων; ὦ παμπόνηρε πῶς οὖν
κυνὸς βορὰν σιτούμενος μαχεῖ σὺ κυνοκεφάλλῳ;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ἄλλα γ᾽ἐστί μου κόβαλα παιδὸς ὄντος.
ἐξηπάτων γὰρ τοὺς μαγείρους ἐπιλέγων τοιαυτί·
"σκέψασθε παῖδες· οὐχ ὁρᾶθ᾽; ὥρα νέα, χελιδών".
οἱ δ᾽ἔβλεπον, κἀγὼ ᾽ν τοσούτῳ τῶν κρεῶν ἔκλεπτον.

Χορός

ὦ δεξιώτατον κρέας σοφῶς γε προὐνοήσω·
ὥσπερ ἀκαλήφας ἐσθίων πρὸ χελιδόνων ἔκλεπτες.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ ταῦτα δρῶν ἐλάνθανόν γ᾽· εἰ δ᾽οὖν ἴδοι τις αὐτῶν,
ἀποκρυπτόμενος ἐς τὼ κοχώνα τοὺς θεοὺς ἀπώμνυν·
ὥστ᾽εἶπ᾽ἀνὴρ τῶν ῥητόρων ἰδών με τοῦτο δρῶντα· 425
“οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ὅπως ὁ παῖς ὅδ᾽οὐ τὸν δῆμον ἐπιτροπεύσει”.

Χορός
εὖ γε ξυνέβαλεν αὖτ᾽· ἀτὰρ δῆλόν γ᾽ἀφ᾽οὗ ξυνέγνω·
ὁτιὴ ᾽πιώρκεις θ᾽ἡρπακὼς καὶ κρέας ὁ πρωκτὸς εἶχεν.

Κλέων
ἐγώ σε παύσω τοῦ θράσους, οἶμαι δὲ μᾶλλον ἄμφω.
ἔξειμι γάρ σοι λαμπρὸς ἤδη καὶ μέγας καθιείς, 430
ὁμοῦ ταράττων τήν τε γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλατταν εἰκῇ.
Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐγὼ δὲ συστείλας γε τοὺς ἀλλᾶντας εἶτ᾽ἀφήσω
κατὰ κῦμ᾽ἐμαυτὸν οὔριον, κλάειν σε μακρὰ κελεύσας.

Δημοσθένης
κἄγωγ᾽, ἐάν τι παραχαλᾷ, τὴν ἀντλίαν φυλάξω.

Κλέων
οὗτοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα καταπροίξει τάλαντα πολλὰ 435
κλέψας Ἀθηναίων.

Δημοσθένης
ἄθρει καὶ τοῦ ποδὸς παρίει·
ὡς οὗτος ἤδη καικίας καὶ συκοφαντίας πνεῖ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
σὲ δ᾽ἐκ Ποτειδαίας ἔχοντ᾽εὖ οἶδα δέκα τάλαντα.

Κλέων
τί δῆτα; βούλει τῶν ταλάντων ἓν λαβὼν σιωπᾶν;

Χορός

ἀνὴρ ἂν ἡδέως λάβοι. τοὺς τερθρίους παρίει· 440
τὸ πνεῦμ᾽ ἔλαττον γίγνεται.

Κλέων
φεύξει γραφὰς . . .
ἑκατονταλάντους τέτταρας.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
σὺ δ᾽ ἀστρατείας γ᾽ εἴκοσιν,
κλοπῆς δὲ πλεῖν ἢ χιλίας.

Κλέων
ἐκ τῶν ἀλιτηρίων σέ φημι 445
γεγονέναι τῶν τῆς θεοῦ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τὸν πάππον εἶναί φημί σου
τῶν δορυφόρων —

Κλέων
ποίων; φράσον.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τῶν Βυρσίνης τῆς Ἱππίου.

Κλέων
κόβαλος εἶ. 450

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
πανοῦργος εἶ.

Χορός
παῖ᾽ ἀνδρικῶς.

Κλέων
ἰοὺ ἰού,
τύπτουσί μ᾽ οἱ ξυνωμόται.

Χορός
παῖ᾽ αὐτὸν ἀνδρειότατα, καὶ

γάστριζε καὶ τοῖς ἐντέροις
καὶ τοῖς κόλοις,
χὤπως κολᾷ τὸν ἄνδρα.
ὦ γεννικώτατον κρέας ψυχήν τ᾽ ἄριστε πάντων,
καὶ τῇ πόλει σωτὴρ φανεὶς ἡμῖν τε τοῖς πολίταις,
ὡς εὖ τὸν ἄνδρα ποικίλως θ᾽ ὑπῆλθες ἐν λόγοισιν.
πῶς ἄν σ᾽ ἐπαινέσαιμεν οὕτως ὥσπερ ἠδόμεσθα;

Κλέων
ταυτὶ μὰ τὴν Δήμητρά μ᾽ οὐκ ἐλάνθανεν
τεκταινόμενα τὰ πράγματ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἠπιστάμην
γομφούμεν᾽ αὐτὰ πάντα καὶ κολλώμενα.

Χορός
οἵμοι σὺ δ᾽ οὐδὲν ἐξ ἀμαξουργοῦ λέγεις;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὔκουν μ᾽ ἐν Ἄργει γ᾽ οἷα πράττεις λανθάνει.
πρόφασιν μὲν Ἀργείους φίλους ἡμῖν ποιεῖ,
ἰδίᾳ δ᾽ ἐκεῖ Λακεδαιμονίοις ξυγγίγνεται.
καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἐφ᾽ οἷσίν ἐστι συμφυσώμενα
ἐγᾦδ᾽· ἐπὶ γὰρ τοῖς δεδεμένοις χαλκεύεται.

Χορός
εὖ γ᾽ εὖ γε, χάλκευ ἀντὶ τῶν κολλωμένων.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ ξυγκροτοῦσιν ἄνδρες αὖτ᾽ ἐκεῖθεν αὖ,
καὶ ταῦτά μ᾽ οὔτ᾽ ἀργύριον οὔτε χρυσίον
διδοὺς ἀναπείσεις οὔτε προσπέμπων φίλους,
ὅπως ἐγὼ ταῦτ᾽ οὐκ Ἀθηναίοις φράσω.

Κλέων
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν αὐτίκα μάλ᾽ ἐς βουλὴν ἰὼν
ὑμῶν ἁπάντων τὰς ξυνωμοσίας ἐρῶ,
καὶ τὰς ξυνόδους τὰς νυκτερινὰς τὰς ἐν πόλει,
καὶ πάνθ᾽ ἃ Μήδοις καὶ βασιλεῖ ξυνόμνυτε,
καὶ τἀκ Βοιωτῶν ταῦτα συντυρούμενα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
πῶς οὖν ὁ τυρὸς ἐν Βοιωτοῖς ὤνιος;

Κλέων
ἐγώ σε νὴ τὸν Ἡρακλέα παραστορῶ.

Χορός
ἄγε δὴ σὺ τίνα νοῦν ἢ τίνα ψυχὴν ἔχεις;
νυνί γε δείξεις, εἴπερ ἀπεκρύψω τότε
ἐς τὼ κοχώνα τὸ κρέας, ὡς αὐτὸς λέγεις·
θεύσει γὰρ ᾄξας ἐς τὸ βουλευτήριον,
ὡς οὗτος ἐσπεσὼν ἐκεῖσε διαβαλεῖ
ἡμᾶς ἅπαντας καὶ κράγον κεκράξεται.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἀλλ᾽ εἶμι· πρῶτον δ᾽ ὡς ἔχω τὰς κοιλίας
καὶ τὰς μαχαίρας ἐνθαδὶ καταθήσομαι.

Δημοσθένης
ἔχε νυν, ἄλειψον τὸν τράχηλον τουτῳί,
ἵν᾽ ἐξολισθάνειν δύνῃ τὰς διαβολάς.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἀλλ᾽ εὖ λέγεις καὶ παιδοτριβικῶς ταυταγί.

Δημοσθένης
ἔχε νυν, ἐπέγκαψον λαβὼν ταδί.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τί δαί;

Δημοσθένης
ἵν᾽ ἄμεινον ᾖ τᾶν ἐσκοροδισμένος μάχῃ.
καὶ σπεῦδε ταχέως.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ταῦτα δρῶ.

Δημοσθένης

μέμνησό νυν
δάκνειν διαβάλλειν, τοὺς λόφους κατεσθίειν,
χὥπως τὰ κάλλαὶ ἀποφαγὼν ἥξεις πάλιν.

Χορός
ἄλλ᾽ἴθι χαίρων, καὶ πράξειας
κατὰ νοῦν τὸν ἐμόν, καί σε φυλάττοι
Ζεὺς ἀγοραῖος· καὶ νικήσας
αὖθις ἐκεῖθεν πάλιν ὡς ἡμᾶς
ἔλθοις στεφάνοις κατάπαστος.
ὑμεῖς δ᾽ἡμῖν προσέχετε τὸν νοῦν
τοῖς ἀναπαίστοις,
ὦ παντοίας ἤδη Μούσης
πειραθέντες καθ᾽ἑαυτούς.

Χορός
εἰ μέν τις ἀνὴρ τῶν ἀρχαίων κωμῳδοδιδάσκαλος ἡμᾶς
ἠνάγκαζεν λέξοντας ἔπη πρὸς τὸ θέατρον παραβῆναι,
οὐκ ἂν φαύλως ἔτυχεν τούτου· νῦν δ᾽ἄξιός ἐσθ᾽ὁ ποιητής,
ὅτι τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἡμῖν μισεῖ τολμᾷ τε λέγειν τὰ δίκαια,
καὶ γενναίως πρὸς τὸν τυφῶ χωρεῖ καὶ τὴν ἐριώλην.
ἃ δὲ θαυμάζειν ὑμῶν φησιν πολλοὺς αὐτῷ προσιόντας
καὶ βασανίζειν ὡς οὐχὶ πάλαι χορὸν αἰτοίη καθ᾽ἑαυτόν,
ἡμᾶς ὑμῖν ἐκέλευε φράσαι περὶ τούτου. φησὶ γὰρ ἀνὴρ
οὐχ ὑπ᾽ἀνοίας τοῦτο πεπονθὼς διατρίβειν, ἀλλὰ νομίζων
κωμῳδοδιδασκαλίαν εἶναι χαλεπώτατον ἔργον ἁπάντων·
πολλῶν γὰρ δὴ πειρασάντων αὐτὴν ὀλίγοις χαρίσασθαι·
ὑμᾶς τε πάλαι διαγιγνώσκων ἐπετείους τὴν φύσιν ὄντας
καὶ τοὺς προτέρους τῶν ποιητῶν ἅμα τῷ γήρᾳ προδιδόντας·
τοῦτο μὲν εἰδὼς ἔπαθε Μάγνης ἅμα ταῖς πολιαῖς κατιούσαις,
ὃς πλεῖστα χορῶν τῶν ἀντιπάλων νίκης ἔστησε τροπαῖα·
πάσας δ᾽ὑμῖν φωνὰς ἰεὶς καὶ ψάλλων καὶ πτερυγίζων
καὶ λυδίζων καὶ ψηνίζων καὶ βαπτόμενος βατραχείοις
οὐκ ἐξήρκεσεν, ἀλλὰ τελευτῶν ἐπὶ γήρως, οὐ γὰρ ἐφ᾽ἥβης,
ἐξεβλήθη πρεσβύτης ὤν, ὅτι τοῦ σκώπτειν ἀπελείφθη· 525
εἶτα Κρατίνου μεμνημένος, ὃς πολλῷ ῥεύσας ποτ᾽ἐπαίνῳ
διὰ τῶν ἀφελῶν πεδίων ἔρρει, καὶ τῆς στάσεως παρασύρων

ἐφόρει τὰς δρῦς καὶ τὰς πλατάνους καὶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς προθελύμνους·
ᾖσαι δ᾽οὐκ ἦν ἐν ξυμποσίῳ πλὴν “Δωροῖ συκοπέδιλε”,
καὶ “τέκτονες εὐπαλάμων ὕμνων”· οὕτως ἤνθησεν ἐκεῖνος. 530
νυνὶ δ᾽ὑμεῖς αὐτὸν ὁρῶντες παραληροῦντ᾽οὐκ ἐλεεῖτε,
ἐκπιπτουσῶν τῶν ἠλέκτρων καὶ τοῦ τόνου οὐκέτ᾽ἐνόντος
τῶν θ᾽ἁρμονιῶν διαχασκουσῶν· ἀλλὰ γέρων ὢν περιέρρει,
ὥσπερ Κοννᾶς, στέφανον μὲν ἔχων αὖον δίψῃ δ᾽ἀπολωλώς,
ὃν χρῆν διὰ τὰς προτέρας νίκας πίνειν ἐν τῷ πρυτανείῳ, 535
καὶ μὴ ληρεῖν ἀλλὰ θεᾶσθαι λιπαρὸν παρὰ τῷ Διονύσῳ.
οἵας δὲ Κράτης ὀργὰς ὑμῶν ἠνέσχετο καὶ στυφελιγμούς,
ὃς ἀπὸ σμικρᾶς δαπάνης ὑμᾶς ἀριστίζων ἀπέπεμπεν,
ἀπὸ κραμβοτάτου στόματος μάττων ἀστειοτάτας ἐπινοίας·
χοὗτος μέντοι μόνος ἀντήρκει, τοτὲ μὲν πίπτων τοτὲ δ᾽οὐχί. 540
ταῦτ᾽ὀρρωδῶν διέτριβεν ἀεί, καὶ πρὸς τούτοισιν ἔφασκεν
ἐρέτην χρῆναι πρῶτα γενέσθαι πρὶν πηδαλίοις ἐπιχειρεῖν,
κᾆτ᾽ἐντεῦθεν πρῳρατεῦσαι καὶ τοὺς ἀνέμους διαθρῆσαι,
κᾆτα κυβερνᾶν αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ. τούτων οὖν οὕνεκα πάντων,
ὅτι σωφρονικῶς κοὐκ ἀνοήτως ἐσπηδήσας ἐφλυάρει, 545
αἵρεσθ᾽αὐτῷ πολὺ τὸ ῥόθιον, παραπέμψατ᾽ἐφ᾽ἕνδεκα κώπαις
θόρυβον χρηστὸν ληναΐτην,
ἵν᾽ὁ ποιητὴς ἀπίῃ χαίρων
κατὰ νοῦν πράξας,
φαιδρὸς λάμποντι μετώπῳ. 550
ἵππι᾽ἄναξ Πόσειδον, ᾧ
χαλκοκρότων ἵππων κτύπος
καὶ χρεμετισμὸς ἀνδάνει
καὶ κυανέμβολοι θοαὶ
μισθοφόροι τριήρεις, 555
μειρακίων θ᾽ἅμιλλα λαμπρυνομένων ἐν ἅρμασιν
καὶ βαρυδαιμονούντων,
δεῦρ᾽ἔλθ᾽ἐς χορὸν ᾧ χρυσοτρίαιν᾽ᾧ
δελφίνων μεδέων Σουνιάρατε, 560
ᾧ Γεραίστιε παῖ Κρόνου,
Φαρμίωνί τε φίλτατ᾽ἐκ
τῶν ἄλλων τε θεῶν Ἀθηναίοις
πρὸς τὸ παρεστός.
εὐλογῆσαι βουλόμεσθα τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν, ὅτι 565
ἄνδρες ἦσαν τῆσδε τῆς γῆς ἄξιοι καὶ τοῦ πέπλου,
οἵτινες πεζαῖς μάχαισιν ἔν τε ναυφάρκτῳ στρατῷ

πανταχοῦ νικῶντες ἀεὶ τήνδ᾽ ἐκόσμησαν πόλιν·
οὐ γὰρ οὐδεὶς πώποτ᾽ αὐτῶν τοῦς ἐναντίους ἰδὼν
ἠρίθμησεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ θυμὸς εὐθὺς ἦν Ἀμυνίας· 570
εἰ δέ που πέσοιεν ἐς τὸν ὦμον ἐν μάχῃ τινί,
τοῦτ᾽ ἀπεψήσαντ᾽ ἄν, εἶτ᾽ ἠρνοῦντο μὴ πεπτωκέναι,
ἀλλὰ διεπάλαιον αὖθις. καὶ στρατηγὸς οὐδ᾽ ἂν εἷς
τῶν πρὸ τοῦ σίτησιν ᾔτησ᾽ ἐρόμενος Κλεαίνετον·
νῦν δ᾽ ἐὰν μὴ προεδρίαν φέρωσι καὶ τὰ σιτία, 575
οὐ μαχεῖσθαί φασιν. ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ἀξιοῦμεν τῇ πόλει
προῖκα γενναίως ἀμύνειν καὶ θεοῖς ἐγχωρίοις.
καὶ πρὸς οὐκ αἰτοῦμεν οὐδὲν πλὴν τοσουτονὶ μόνον·
ἤν ποτ᾽ εἰρήνη γένηται καὶ πόνων παυσώμεθα,
μὴ φθονεῖθ᾽ ἡμῖν κομῶσι μηδ᾽ ἀπεστλεγγισμένοις. 580
Ὦ πολιοῦχε Παλλάς, ὦ
τῆς ἱερωτάτης ἁπασῶν
πολέμῳ τε καὶ ποιηταῖς
δυνάμει θ᾽ ὑπερφερούσης
μεδέουσα χώρας, 585
δεῦρ᾽ ἀφικοῦ λαβοῦσα τὴν
ἐν στρατιαῖς τε καὶ μάχαις
ἡμετέραν ξυνεργὸν
Νίκην, ἣ χορικῶν ἐστιν ἑταίρα
τοῖς τ᾽ ἐχθροῖσι μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν στασιάζει. 590
νῦν οὖν δεῦρο φάνηθι· δεῖ
γὰρ τοῖς ἀνδράσι τοῖσδε πάσῃ
τέχνῃ πορίσαι σε νίκην
εἴπερ ποτὲ καὶ νῦν.
ἃ ξύνισμεν τοῖσιν ἵπποις, βουλόμεσθ᾽ ἐπαινέσαι. 595
ἄξιοι δ᾽ εἴσ᾽ εὐλογεῖσθαι· πολλὰ γὰρ δὴ πάγματα
ξυνδιήνεγκαν μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν, ἐσβολάς τε καὶ μάχας.
ἀλλὰ τἀν τῇ μὲν αὐτῶν οὐκ ἄγαν θαυμάζομεν,
ὡς ὅτ᾽ ἐς τὰς ἱππαγωγοὺς εἰσεπήδων ἀνδρικῶς,
πριάμενοι κώθωνας, οἱ δὲ καὶ σκόροδα καὶ κρόμμυα· 600
εἶτα τὰς κώπας λαβόντες ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς οἱ βροτοὶ
ἐμβαλόντες ἀνεβρύαξαν, “ἱππαπαῖ, τίς ἐμβαλεῖ;
ληπτέον μᾶλλον. τί δρῶμεν; οὐκ ἐλᾷς ὦ σαμφόρα;”
ἐξεπήδων τ᾽ ἐς Κόρινθον· εἶτα δ᾽ οἱ νεώτεροι
ταῖς ὁπλαῖς ὤρυττον εὐνὰς καὶ μετῆσαν στρώματα· 605
ἤσθιον δὲ τοὺς παγούρους ἀντὶ ποίας Μηδικῆς,

εἴ τις ἐξέρποι θύραζε κἀκ βυθοῦ θηρώμενοι·
ὥστ᾽ἔφη Θέωρος εἰπεῖν καρκίνον Κορίνθιον,
“δεινά γ᾽ὦ Πόσειδον εἰ μήτ᾽ἐν βυθῷ δυνήσομαι
μήτε γῇ μήτ᾽ἐν θαλάττῃ διαφυγεῖν τοὺς ἱππέας”. 610

Χορός
ὦ φίλτατ᾽ἀνδρῶν καὶ νεανικώτατε.
ὅσην ἀπὼν παρέσχες ἡμῖν φροντίδα·
καὶ νῦν ἐπειδὴ σῶς ἐλήλυθας πάλιν,
ἄγγειλον ἡμῖν πῶς τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ἠγωνίσω.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τί δ᾽ἄλλο γ᾽εἰ μὴ Νικόβουλος ἐγενόμην; 615

Χορός
νῦν ἄρ᾽ἄξιόν γε πᾶσίν ἐστιν ἐπολολύξαι.
ὦ καλὰ λέγων πολὺ δ᾽ἀμείνον᾽ἔτι τῶν λόγων
ἐργασάμεν᾽, εἴθ᾽ἐπέλθοις
ἅπαντά μοι σαφῶς·
ὡς ἐγώ μοι δοκῶ 620
κἂν μακρὰν ὁδὸν διελθεῖν
ὥστ᾽ἀκοῦσαι. πρὸς τάδ᾽ὦ βέλτιστε
θαρρήσας λέγ᾽, ὡς, ἅπαντες
ἡδόμεσθά σοι. 623β

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ μὴν ἀκοῦσαί γ᾽ἄξιον τῶν πραγμάτων.
εὐθὺς γὰρ αὐτοῦ κατόπιν ἐνθένδ᾽ἰέμην· 625
ὁ δ᾽ἄρ᾽ἔνδον ἐλασίβροντ᾽ἀναρρηγνὺς ἔπη
τερατευόμενος ἤρειδε κατὰ τῶν ἱππέων,
κρημνοὺς “ἐρείδων” καὶ ξυνωμότας λέγων
πιθανώταθ᾽· ἡ βουλὴ δ᾽ἅπασ᾽ἀκροωμένη
ἐγένεθ᾽ὑπ᾽αὐτοῦ ψευδατραφάξυος πλέα, 630
κἄβλεψε νᾶπυ καὶ τὰ μέτωπ᾽ἀνέσπασεν.
κἄγωγ᾽ὅτε δὴ γ᾽νων ἐνδεχομένην τοὺς λόγους
καὶ τοῖς φενακισμοῖσιν ἐξαπατωμένην,
“ἄγε δὴ Σκίταλοι καὶ Φένακες”, ἦν δ᾽ἐγώ,

“Βερέσχεθοί τε καὶ Κόβαλοι καὶ Μόθων,
ἀγορά τ᾽ἐν ᾗ παῖς ὢν ἐπαιδεύθην ἐγώ,
νῦν μοι φράσος καὶ γλῶτταν εὔπορον δότε
φωνήν τ᾽ἀναιδῆ”. ταῦτα φροντίζοντί μοι
ἐκ δεξιᾶς ἀπέπαρδε καταπύγων ἀνήρ.
κἀγὼ προσέκυσα· κᾆτα τῷ πρωκτῷ θενὼν
τὴν κιγκλίδ᾽ἐξήραξα κἀναχανὼν μέγα
ἀνέκραγον· “ὦ βουλὴ λόγους ἀγαθοὺς φέρων
εὐαγγελίσασθαι πρῶτον ὑμῖν βούλομαι·
ἐξ οὗ γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁ πόλεμος κατερράγη,
οὐπώποτ᾽ἀφύας εἶδον ἀξιωτέρας”.
τῶν δ᾽εὐθέως τὰ πρόσωπα διεγαλήνισεν·
εἶτ᾽ἐστεφάνουν μ᾽εὐαγγέλια· κἀγὼ φρασα
αὐτοῖς ἀπόρρητον ποιησάμενος ταχύ,
ἵνα τὰς ἀφύας ὠνοῖντο πολλὰς τοὐβολοῦ,
τῶν δημιουργῶν ξυλλαβεῖν τὰ τρύβλια.
οἱ δ᾽ἀνεκρότησαν καὶ πρὸς ἔμ᾽ἐκεχήνεσαν.
ὁ δ᾽ὑπονοήσας ὁ Παφλαγών, εἰδὼς ἄρα
οἷς ἥδεθ᾽ἡ βουλὴ μάλιστα ῥήμασιν,
γνώμην ἔλεξεν· “ἄνδρες, ἤδη μοι δοκεῖ
ἐπὶ συμφοραῖς ἀγαθαῖσιν εἰσηγγελμέναις
εὐαγγέλια θύειν ἑκατὸν βοῦς τῇ θεῷ”.
ἐπένευσεν εἰς ἐκεῖνον ἡ βουλὴ πάλιν.
κἄγωγ᾽ὅτε δὴ γ᾽νων τοῖς βολίτοις ἡττημένος,
διακοσίαισι βουσὶν ὑπερηκόντισα,
τῇ δ᾽Ἀγροτέρᾳ κατὰ χιλιῶν παρήνεσα
εὐχὴν ποιήσασθαι χιμάρων εἰς αὔριον,
αἱ τριχίδες εἰ γενοίαθ᾽ἑκατὸν τοὐβολοῦ.
ἐκαραδόκησεν εἰς ἔμ᾽ἡ βουλὴ πάλιν.
ὁ δὲ ταῦτ᾽ἀκούσας ἐκπλαγεὶς ἐφληνάφα.
κᾆθ᾽εἶλκον αὐτὸν οἱ πρυτάνεις χοἱ τοξόται.
οἱ δ᾽ἐθορύβουν περὶ τῶν ἀφύων ἑστηκότες·
ὁ δ᾽ἠντεβόλει γ᾽αὐτοὺς ὀλίγον μεῖναι χρόνον,
“ἵν᾽ἅτθ᾽ὁ κῆρυξ οὐκ Λακεδαίμονος λέγει
πύθησθ᾽, ἀφῖκται γὰρ περὶ σπονδῶν”, λέγων.
οἱ δ᾽ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος ἅπαντες ἀνέκραγον·
“νυνὶ περὶ σπονδῶν; ἐπειδή γ᾽ὦ μέλε
ᾔσθοντο τὰς ἀφύας παρ᾽ἡμῖν ἀξίας.
οὐ δεόμεθα σπονδῶν· ὁ πόλεμος ἑρπέτω”.

ἐκεκράγεσάν τε τοὺς πρυτάνεις ἀφιέναι·
εἶθ᾽ ὑπερεπήδων τοὺς δρυφάκτους πανταχῇ.
ἐγὼ δὲ τὰ κορίανν᾽ ἐπριάμην ὑποδραμὼν
ἅπαντα τά τε γήτει᾽ ὅσ᾽ ἦν ἐν τἀγορᾷ·
ἔπειτα ταῖς ἀφύαις ἐδίδουν ἡδύσματα
ἀποροῦσιν αὐτοῖς προῖκα κἀχαριζόμην.
οἱ δ᾽ ὑπερεπῄνουν ὑπερεπύππαζόν τέ με
ἅπαντες οὕτως ὥστε τὴν βουλὴν ὅλην
ὀβολοῦ κοριάννοις ἀναλαβὼν ἐλήλυθα.

Χορός
πάντα τοι πέπραγας οἷα χρὴ τὸν εὐτυχοῦντα·
ηὗρε δ᾽ ὁ πανοῦργος ἕτερον πολὺ πανουργίαις
μείζοσι κεκασμένον
καὶ δόλοισι ποικίλοις
ῥήμασίν θ᾽ αἱμύλοις.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅπως ἀγωνιεῖ φρόντιζε
τἀπίλοιπ᾽ ἄριστα·
συμμάχους δ᾽ ἡμᾶς ἔχων εὖνους
ἐπίστασαι πάλαι.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ μὴν ὁ Παφλαγὼν οὐτοσὶ προσέρχεται,
ὠθῶν κολόκυμα καὶ ταράττων καὶ κυκῶν,
ὡς δὴ καταπιόμενός με. μορμὼ τοῦ θράσους.

Κλέων
εἰ μή σ᾽ ἀπολέσαιμ᾽, εἴ τι τῶν αὐτῶν ἐμοὶ
ψευδῶν ἐνείη, διαπέσοιμι πανταχῇ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἥσθην ἀπειλαῖς, ἐγέλασα ψολοκομπίαις,
ἀπεπυδάρισα μόθωνα, περιεκόκκασα.

Κλέων
οὔτοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽, ἐὰν μή σ᾽ ἐκφάγω
ἐκ τῆσδε τῆς γῆς, οὐδέποτε βιώσομαι.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἢν μὴ κ᾽φάγῃς; ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽, ἢν μή σ᾽ἐκπίω
κἀπεκροφήσας αὐτὸς ἐπιδιαρραγῶ.

Κλέων
ἀπολῶ σε νὴ τὴν προεδρίαν τὴν ἐκ Πύλου.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἰδοὺ προεδρίαν· οἷον ὄψομαί σ᾽ἐγὼ
ἐκ τῆς προεδρίας ἔσχατον θεώμενον.

Κλέων
ἐν τῷ ξύλῳ δήσω σε νὴ τὸν οὐρανόν.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὡς ὀξύθυμος. φέρε τί σοι δῶ καταφαγεῖν;
ἐπὶ τῷ φάγοις ἥδιστ᾽ἄν; ἐπὶ βαλλαντίῳ;

Κλέων
ἐξαρπάσομαί σου τοῖς ὄνυξι τἄντερα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἀπονυχιῶ σου τὰν πρυτανείῳ σιτία.

Κλέων
ἕλξω σε πρὸς τὸν δῆμον, ἵνα δῷς μοι δίκην.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
κἀγὼ δέ σ᾽ἕλξω καὶ διαβαλῶ πλείονα.

Κλέων
ἀλλ᾽ὦ πόνηρε σοὶ μὲν οὐδὲν πείθεται·
ἐγὼ δ᾽ἐκείνου καταγελῶ γ᾽ὅσον θέλω.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὡς σφόδρα σὺ τὸν δῆμον σεαυτοῦ νενόμικας.

Κλέων
ἐπίσταμαι γὰρ αὐτὸν οἷς ψωμίζεται.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
κᾆθ᾽ ὥσπερ αἱ τίτθαι γε σιτίζεις κακῶς.
μασώμενος γὰρ τῷ μὲν ὀλίγον ἐντίθης,
αὐτὸς δ᾽ ἐκείνου τριπλάσιον κατέσπακας.

Κλέων
καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ ὑπό γε δεξιότητος τῆς ἐμῆς
δύναμαι ποιεῖν τὸν δῆμον εὐρὺν καὶ στενόν.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
χὠ πρωκτὸς οὑμὸς τουτογὶ σοφίζεται.

Κλέων
οὐκ ὦγάθ᾽ ἐν βουλῇ με δόξεις καθυβρίσαι.
ἴωμεν ἐς τὸν δῆμον.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὐδὲν κωλύει·
ἰδοὺ βάδιζε, μηδὲν ἡμᾶς ἰσχέτω.

Κλέων
ὦ Δῆμε δεῦρ᾽ ἔξελθε.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
νὴ Δί᾽ ὦ πάτερ
ἔξελθε δῆτ᾽.

Κλέων
ὦ Δημίδιον <ὦ> φίλτατον
ἔξελθ᾽, ἵν᾽ εἰδῇς οἷα περιυβρίζομαι.

Δῆμος
τίνες οἱ βοῶντες; οὐκ ἄπιτ᾽ ἀπὸ τῆς θύρας;
τὴν εἰρεσιώνην μου κατεσπαράξατε.
τίς ὦ Παφλαγὼν ἀδικεῖ σε;

Κλέων
διὰ σὲ τύπτομαι
ὑπὸ τουτουὶ καὶ τῶν νεανίσκων.

Δῆμος
τιή;

Κλέων
ὁτιὴ φιλῶ σ᾽ ὦ Δῆμ᾽ἐραστής τ᾽εἰμὶ σός.

Δῆμος
σὺ δ᾽εἶ τίς ἐτεόν;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἀντεραστὴς τουτουί,
ἐρῶν πάλαι σου βουλόμενός τέ σ᾽εὖ ποιεῖν,
ἄλλοι τε πολλοὶ καὶ καλοί τε κἀγαθοί. 735
ἀλλ᾽οὐχ οἷοί τ᾽ἐσμὲν διὰ τουτονί. σὺ γὰρ
ὅμοιος εἶ τοῖς παισὶ τοῖς ἐρωμένοις·
τοὺς μὲν καλούς τε κἀγαθοὺς οὐ προσδέχει,
σαυτὸν δὲ λυχνοπώλαισι καὶ νευρορράφοις
καὶ σκυτοτόμοις καὶ βυρσοπώλαισιν δίδως.· 740

Κλέων
εὖ γὰρ ποιῶ τὸν δῆμον.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
εἰπέ νυν τί δρῶν;

Κλέων
ὅ τι; "τῶν στρατηγῶν ὑποδραμὼν τῶν ἐκ Πύλου",
πλεύσας ἐκεῖσε, τοὺς Λάκωνας ἤγαγον.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐγὼ δὲ περιπατῶν γ᾽ἀπ᾽ἐργαστηρίου
ἕψοντος ἑτερου τὴν χύτραν ὑφειλόμην. 745

Κλέων
καὶ μὴν ποιήσας αὐτίκα μάλ᾽ἐκκλησίαν
ὦ Δῆμ᾽ἵν᾽εἰδῇς ὁπότερος νῷν ἐστί σοι
εὐνούστερος, διάκρινον, ἵνα τοῦτον φιλῇς.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης

ναὶ ναὶ διάκρινον δῆτα, πλὴν μὴ ᾽ν τῇ πυκνί.

Δῆμος
οὐκ ἂν καθιζοίμην ἐν ἄλλῳ χωρίῳ.
ἀλλ᾽ἐς τὸ πρόσθε. χρὴ παρεῖν᾽ἐς τὴν πύκνα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οἴμοι κακοδαίμων ὡς ἀπόλωλ᾽. ὁ γὰρ γέρων
οἴκοι μὲν ἀνδρῶν ἐστι δεξιώτατος,
ὅταν δ᾽ἐπὶ ταυτησὶ καθῆται τῆς πέτρας,
κέχηνεν ὥσπερ ἐμποδίζων ἰσχάδας.

Χορός
νῦν δή σε πάντα δεῖ κάλων ἐξιέναι σεαυτοῦ,
καὶ λῆμα θούριον φορεῖν καὶ λόγους ἀφύκτους
ὅτοισι τόνδ᾽ὑπερβαλεῖ. ποικίλος γὰρ ἀνὴρ
κἀκ τῶν ἀμηχάνων πόρους εὐμήχανος πορίζειν.
πρὸς ταῦθ᾽ὅπως ἕξει πολὺς καὶ λαμπρὸς ἐς τὸν ἄνδρα.
ἀλλὰ φυλάττου καὶ πρὶν ἐκεῖνον προσκεῖσθαί σοι πρότερος σὺ
τοὺς δελφῖνας μετεωρίζου καὶ τὴν ἄκατον παραβάλλου.

Κλέων
τῇ μὲν δεσποίνῃ Ἀθηναίᾳ τῇ τῆς πόλεως μεδεούσῃ
εὔχομαι, εἰ μὲν περὶ τὸν δῆμον τὸν Ἀθηναίων γεγένημαι
βέλτιστος ἀνὴρ μετὰ Λυσικλέα καὶ Κύνναν καὶ Σαλαβακχώ,
ὥσπερ νυνὶ μηδὲν δράσας δειπνεῖν ἐν πρυτανείῳ·
εἰ δέ σε μισῶ καὶ μὴ περὶ σοῦ μάχομαι μόνος ἀντιβεβηκώς,
ἀπολοίμην καὶ διαπρισθείην κατατμηθείην τε λέπαδνα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
κἄγωγ᾽ὦ Δῆμ᾽, εἰ μή σε φιλῶ καὶ μὴ στέργω, κατατμηθεὶς
ἑψοίμην ἐν περικομματίοις· κεἰ μὴ τούτοισι πέποιθας,
ἐπὶ ταυτησὶ κατακνησθείην ἐν μυττωτῷ μετὰ τυροῦ,
καὶ τῇ κρεάγρᾳ τῶν ὀρχιπέδων ἑλκοίμην ἐς Κεραμεικόν.

Κλέων
καὶ πῶς ἂν ἐμοῦ μᾶλλόν σε φιλῶν ὦ Δῆμε γένοιτο πολίτης;

ὃς πρῶτα μὲν ἡνίκ᾽ἐβούλευον σοὶ χρήματα πλεῖστ᾽ἀπέδειξα
ἐν τῷ κοινῷ, τοὺς μὲν στρεβλῶν τοὺς δ᾽ἄγχων τοὺς δὲ μεταιτῶν,
οὐ φροντίζων τῶν ἰδιωτῶν οὐδενός, εἰ σοὶ χαριοίμην.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τοῦτο μὲν ὦ Δῆμ᾽οὐδὲν σεμνόν· κἀγὼ γὰρ τοῦτό σε δράσω.
ἁρπάζων γὰρ τοὺς ἄρτους σοι τοὺς ἀλλοτρίους παραθήσω.
ὡς δ᾽οὐχὶ φιλεῖ σ᾽οὐδ᾽ἔστ᾽εὔνους, τοῦτ᾽αὐτό σε πρῶτα διδάξω,
ἀλλ᾽ἢ διὰ τοῦτ᾽αὖθ᾽ὁτιή σου τῆς ἀνθρακιᾶς ἀπολαύει.
σὲ γάρ, ὃς Μήδοισι διεξιφίσω περὶ τῆς χώρας Μαραθῶνι,
καὶ νικήσας ἡμῖν μεγάλως ἐγγλωττοτυπεῖν παρέδωκας,
ἐπὶ ταῖσι πέτραις οὐ φροντίζει σκληρῶς σε καθήμενον οὕτως,
οὐχ ὥσπερ ἐγὼ ῥαψάμενός σοι τουτὶ φέρω. ἀλλ᾽ἐπαναίρου,
κᾆτα καθίζου μαλακῶς, ἵνα μὴ τρίβῃς τὴν ἐν Σαλαμῖνι.

Δῆμος
ἄνθρωπε τίς εἶ; μῶν ἔκγονος εἶ τῶν Ἁρμοδίου τις ἐκείνων;
τοῦτό γέ τοί σου τοὔργον ἀληθῶς γενναῖον καὶ φιλόδημον.

Κλέων
ὡς ἀπὸ μικρῶν εὔνους αὐτῷ θωπευματίων γεγένησαι.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ σὺ γὰρ αὐτὸν πολὺ μικροτέροις τούτων δελεάσμασιν εἶλες.

Κλέων
καὶ μὴν εἴ πού τις ἀνὴρ ἐφάνη τῷ δήμῳ μᾶλλον ἀμύνων
ἢ μᾶλλον ἐμοῦ σε φιλῶν, ἐθέλω περὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς περιδόσθαι.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ πῶς σὺ φιλεῖς, ὃς τοῦτον ὁρῶν οἰκοῦντ᾽ἐν ταῖς φιδάκναισι
καὶ γυπαρίοις καὶ πυργιδίοις ἔτος ὄγδοον οὐκ ἐλεαίρεις,
ἀλλὰ καθείρξας αὐτὸν βλίττεις; Ἀρχεπτολέμου δὲ φέροντος
τὴν εἰρήνην ἐξεσκέδασας, τὰς πρεσβείας τ᾽ἀπελαύνεις
ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ῥαθαπυγίζων, αἳ τὰς σπονδὰς προκαλοῦνται.

Κλέων
ἵνα γ᾽Ἑλλήνων ἄρξῃ πάντων. ἔστι γὰρ ἐν τοῖς λογίοισιν
ὡς τοῦτον δεῖ ποτ᾽ἐν Ἀρκαδίᾳ πεντώβολον ἡλιάσασθαι,

ἢν ἀναμείνῃ· πάντως δ᾽αὐτὸν θρέψω γ᾽ὼ καὶ θεραπεύσω,
ἐξευρίσκων εὖ καὶ μιαρῶς ὁπόθεν τὸ τριώβολον ἕξει.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὐχ ἵνα γ᾽ἄρξῃ μὰ Δί᾽Ἀρκαδίας προνοούμενος, ἀλλ᾽ἵνα μᾶλλον
σὺ μὲν ἁρπάζῃς καὶ δωροδοκῇς παρὰ τῶν πόλεων, ὁ δὲ δῆμος
ὑπὸ τοῦ πολέμου καὶ τῆς ὁμίχλης ἃ πανουργεῖς μὴ καθορᾷ σου,
ἀλλ᾽ὑπ᾽ἀνάγκης ἅμα καὶ χρείας καὶ μισθοῦ πρός σε κεχήνῃ.
ἢν δέ ποτ᾽εἰς ἀγρὸν οὗτος ἀπελθὼν εἰρηναῖος διατρίψῃ,
καὶ χῖδρα φαγὼν ἀναθαρρήσῃ καὶ στεμφύλῳ ἐς λόγον ἔλθῃ,
γνώσεται οἵων ἀγαθῶν αὐτὸν τῇ μισθοφορᾷ παρεκόπτου·
εἶθ᾽ἥξει σοι δριμὺς ἄγροικος κατὰ σοῦ τὴν ψῆφον ἰχνεύων.
ἃ σὺ γιγνώσκων τόνδ᾽ἐξαπατᾷς καὶ ὀνειροπολεῖς περὶ σαυτοῦ.

Κλέων
οὔκουν δεινὸν ταυτί σε λέγειν δῆτ᾽ἔστ᾽ἐμὲ καὶ διαβάλλειν
πρὸς Ἀθηναίους καὶ τὸν δῆμον, πεποιηκότα πλείονα χρηστὰ
νὴ τὴν Δήμητρα Θεμιστοκλέους πολλῷ περὶ τὴν πόλιν ἤδη;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὦ πόλις Ἄργους κλύεθ᾽οἷα λέγει. σὺ Θεμιστοκλεῖ ἀντιφερίζεις;
ὃς ἐποίησεν τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν μεστὴν εὐρὼν ἐπιχειλῆ,
καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἀριστώσῃ τὸν Πειραιᾶ προσέμαξεν,
ἀφελών τ᾽οὐδὲν τῶν ἀρχαίων ἰχθῦς καινοὺς παρέθηκεν·
σὺ δ᾽Ἀθηναίους ἐζήτησας μικροπολίτας ἀποφῆναι
διατειχίζων καὶ χρησμῳδῶν, ὁ Θεμιστοκλεῖ ἀντιφερίζων.
κἀκεῖνος μὲν φεύγει τὴν γῆν σὺ δ᾽Ἀχιλλείων ἀπομάττει.

Κλέων
οὔκουν ταυτὶ δεινὸν ἀκούειν ὦ Δῆμ᾽ἐστίν μ᾽ὑπὸ τούτου,
ὁτιή σε φιλῶ;

Δῆμος
παῦ ὦ οὗτος, καὶ μὴ σκέρβολλε πονηρά.
πολλοῦ δὲ πολύν με χρόνον καὶ νῦν ἐλελήθης ἐγκρυφιάζων.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης

μιαρώτατος, ὦ Δημακίδιον, καὶ πλεῖστα πανοῦργα δεδρακώς,
ὁπόταν χασμᾷ, καὶ τοὺς καυλοὺς
τῶν εὐθυνῶν ἐκκαυλίζων
καταβροχθίζει, κἀμφοῖν χειροῖν
μυστιλᾶται τῶν δημοσίων.

Κλέων
οὐ χαιρήσεις, ἀλλά σε κλέπτονθ᾽
αἱρήσω γ᾽ὠ τρεῖς μυριάδας.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τί θαλαττοκοπεῖς καὶ πλατυγίζεις,
μιαρώτατος ὢν περὶ τὸν δῆμον
τὸν Ἀθηναίων; καί σ᾽ἐπιδείξω
νὴ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽, ἢ μὴ ζῴην,
δωροδοκήσαντ᾽ἐκ Μυτιλήνης
πλεῖν ἢ μνᾶς τετταράκοντα.

Χορός
ὦ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις φανεὶς μέγιστον ὠφέλημα,
ζηλῶ σε τῆς εὐγλωττίας. εἰ γὰρ ὧδ᾽ἐποίσεις,
μέγιστος Ἑλλήνων ἔσει, καὶ μόνος καθέξεις
τἀν τῇ πόλει τῶν ξυμμάχων τ᾽ἄρξεις ἔχων τρίαιναν,
ᾗ πολλὰ χρήματ᾽ἐργάσει σείων τε καὶ ταράττων.
καὶ μὴ μεθῇς τὸν ἄνδρ᾽, ἐπειδή σοι λαβὴν δέδωκεν·
κατεργάσει γὰρ ῥᾳδίως πλευρὰς ἔχων τοιαύτας.

Κλέων
οὐκ ὦγαθοὶ ταῦτ᾽ἐστί πω ταύτῃ μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ.
ἐμοὶ γάρ ἐστ᾽εἰργασμένον τοιοῦτον ἔργον ὥστε
ἁπαξάπαντας τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἐπιστομίζειν,
ἕως ἂν ᾖ τῶν ἀσπίδων τῶν ἐκ Πύλου τι λοιπόν.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐπίσχες ἐν ταῖς ἀσπίσιν· λαβὴν γὰρ ἐνδέδωκας.
οὐ γάρ σ᾽ἐχρῆν, εἴπερ φιλεῖς τὸν δῆμον, ἐκ προνοίας
ταύτας ἐᾶν αὐτοῖσι τοῖς πόρπαξιν ἀνατεθῆναι.
ἀλλ᾽ἐστὶ τοῦτ᾽ὦ Δῆμε μηχάνημ᾽, ἵν᾽ἢν σὺ βούλῃ
τὸν ἄνδρα κολάσαι τουτονί, σοὶ τοῦτο μὴ κ᾽γένηται.

ὁρᾷς γὰρ αὐτῷ στῖφος οἷόν ἐστι βυρσοπωλῶν
νεανιῶν· τούτους δὲ περιοικοῦσι μελιτοπῶλαι
καὶ τυροπῶλαι· τοῦτο δ᾽εἰς ἕν ἐστι συγκεκυφός,
ὥστ᾽εἰ σὺ βριμήσαιο καὶ βλέψειας ὀστρακίνδα,
νύκτωρ καθαρπάσαντες ἂν τὰς ἀσπίδας θέοντες
τὰς ἐσβολὰς τῶν ἀλφίτων ἂν καταλάβοιεν ἡμῶν.

Δῆμος
οἴμοι τάλας· ἔχουσι γὰρ πόρπακας; ὦ πόνηρε
ὅσον με παρεκόπτου χρόνον τοιαῦτα κρουσιδημῶν.

Κλέων
ὦ δαιμόνιε μὴ τοῦ λέγοντος ἴσθι, μηδ᾽οἰηθῇς
ἐμοῦ ποθ᾽εὑρήσειν φίλον βελτίον᾽· ὅστις εἶς ὢν
ἔπαυσα τοὺς ξυνωμότας, καί μ᾽οὐ λέληθεν οὐδὲν
ἐν τῇ πόλει ξυνιστάμενον, ἀλλ᾽εὐθέως κέκραγα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὅπερ γὰρ οἱ τὰς ἐγχέλεις θηρώμενοι πέπονθας.
ὅταν μὲν ἡ λίμνη καταστῇ, λαμβάνουσιν οὐδέν·
ἐὰν δ᾽ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω τὸν βόρβορον κυκῶσιν,
αἱροῦσι· καὶ σὺ λαμβάνεις, ἢν τὴν πόλιν ταράττῃς.
ἓν δ᾽εἰπέ μοι τοσουτονί· σκύτη τοσαῦτα πωλῶν
ἔδωκας ἤδη τουτῳὶ κάττυμα παρὰ σεαυτοῦ
ταῖς ἐμβάσιν φάσκων φιλεῖν;

Δῆμος
οὐ δῆτα μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἔγνωκας οὖν δῆτ᾽αὐτὸν οἷός ἐστιν; ἀλλ᾽ἐγώ σοι
ζεῦγος πριάμενος ἐμβάδων τουτὶ φορεῖν δίδωμι.

Δῆμος
κρίνω σ᾽ὅσων ἐγᾦδα περὶ τὸν δῆμον ἄνδρ᾽ἄριστον
εὐνούστατόν τε τῇ πόλει καὶ τοῖσι δακτύλοισιν.

Κλέων
οὐ δεινὸν οὖν δῆτ᾽ἐμβάδας τοσουτονὶ δύνασθαι,

ἐμοῦ δὲ μὴ μνείαν ἔχειν ὅσων πέπονθας; ὅστις
ἔπαυσα τοὺς βινουμένους, τὸν Γρύττον ἐξαλείψας.
Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὔκουν σε δῆτα ταῦτα δεινόν ἐστι πρωκτοτηρεῖν
παῦσαί τε τοὺς βινουμένους; κοὐκ ἔσθ᾽ὅπως ἐκείνους
οὐχὶ φθονῶν ἔπαυσας, ἵνα μὴ ῥήτορες γένωνται.
τονδὶ δ᾽ὁρῶν ἄνευ χιτῶνος ὄντα τηλικοῦτον
οὐπώποτ᾽ἀμφιμασχάλου τὸν Δῆμον ἠξίωσας
χειμῶνος ὄντος· ἀλλ᾽ἐγώ σοι τουτονὶ δίδωμι.

Δῆμος
τοιουτονὶ Θεμιστοκλῆς οὐπώποτ᾽ἐπενόησεν.
καίτοι σοφὸν κἀκεῖν᾽ὁ Πειραιεύς· ἔμοιγε μέντοι
οὐ μεῖζον εἶναι φαίνετ᾽ἐξεύρημα τοῦ χιτῶνος.

Κλέων
οἴμοι τάλας οἵοις πιθηκισμοῖς με περιελαύνεις.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ὅπερ πίνων ἀνὴρ πέπονθ᾽ὅταν χεσείῃ,
τοῖσιν τρόποις τοῖς σοῖσιν ὥσπερ βλαυτίοισι χρῶμαι.

Κλέων
ἀλλ᾽οὐχ ὑπερβαλεῖ με θωπείαις· ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸν
προσαμφιῶ τοδί· σὺ δ᾽οἴμωζ᾽ὦ πόνηρ᾽.

Δῆμος
ἰαιβοῖ.
οὐκ ἐς κόρακας ἀποφθερεῖ βύρσης κάκιστον ὄζων;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ τοῦτό <γ᾽> ἐπίτηδές σε περιήμπεσχ᾽, ἵνα σ᾽ἀποπνίξῃ·
καὶ πρότερον ἐπεβούλευσέ σοι. τὸν καυλὸν οἶσθ᾽ἐκεῖνον
τοῦ σιλφίου τὸν ἄξιον γενόμενον;

Δῆμος
οἶδα μέντοι.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐπίτηδες οὗτος αὐτὸν ἔσπευδ᾽ ἄξιον γενέσθαι,
ἵν᾽ ἐσθίοιτ᾽ ὠνούμενοι, κἄπειτ᾽ ἐν ἡλιαίᾳ
βδέοντες ἀλλήλους ἀποκτείνειαν οἱ δικασταί.

Δῆμος
νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ καὶ πρὸς ἐμὲ τοῦτ᾽ εἶπ᾽ ἀνὴρ Κόπρειος.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὐ γὰρ τόθ᾽ ὑμεῖς βδεόμενοι δήπου ᾽γένεσθε πυρροί; 900

Δῆμος
καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ ἦν γε τοῦτο Πυρράνδρου τὸ μηχάνημα.

Κλέων
οἵοισί μ᾽ ὦ πανοῦργε βωμολοχεύμασιν ταράττεις.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἡ γὰρ θεός μ᾽ ἐκέλευσε νικῆσαί σ᾽ ἀλαζονείαις.

Κλέων
ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ νικήσεις. ἐγὼ γάρ φημί σοι παρέξειν
ὦ Δῆμε μηδὲν δρῶντι μισθοῦ τρύβλιον ῥοφῆσαι. 905

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐγὼ δὲ κυλίχνιόν γέ σοι καὶ φάρμακον δίδωμι
τἀν τοῖσιν ἀντικνημίοις ἑλκύδρια περιαλείφειν.

Κλέων
ἐγὼ δὲ τὰς πολιάς γέ σοὐκλέγων νέον ποιήσω.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἰδοὺ δέχου κέρκον λαγῶ τὠφθαλμιδίω περιψῆν.

Κλέων
ἀπομυξάμενος ὦ Δῆμέ μου πρὸς τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποψῶ. 910

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐμοῦ μὲν οὖν.

Κλέων
ἐμοῦ μὲν οὖν.
ἐγώ σε ποιήσω τριηραρχεῖν
<ἀναλίσκοντα τῶν
σαυτοῦ,> παλαιὰν ναῦν ἔχοντ᾽,
εἰς ἣν ἀναλῶν οὐκ ἐφέξεις
οὐδὲ ναυπηγούμενος·
διαμηχανήσομαί θ᾽ ὅπως
ἂν ἱστίον σαπρὸν λάβῃς.

Χορός
ἀνὴρ παφλάζει, παῦε παῦ᾽,
ὑπερζέων· ὑφελκτέον
τῶν δᾳδίων ἀπαρυστέον
τε τῶν ἀπειλῶν ταυτῃί.

Κλέων
δώσεις ἐμοὶ καλὴν δίκην
ἰπούμενος ταῖς ἐσφοραῖς.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐς τοὺς πλουσίους
σπεύσω σ᾽ ὅπως ἂν ἐγγραφῇς.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀπειλήσω μὲν οὐδέν,
εὔχομαι δέ σοι ταδί·
τὸ μὲν τάγηνον τευθίδων
ἐφεστάναι σίζον· σὲ δὲ
γνώμην ἐρεῖν μέλλοντα περὶ
Μιλησίων καὶ κερδανεῖν
τάλαντον, ἢν κατεργάσῃ,
σπεύδειν ὅπως τῶν τευθίδων
ἐμπλήμενος φθαίης ἔτ᾽ εἰς
ἐκκλησίαν ἐλθών· ἔπειτα
πρὶν φαγεῖν ἀνὴρ μεθήκοι,
καὶ σὺ τὸ τάλαντον λαβεῖν
βουλόμενος ἐσθίων
ἐναποπνιγείης.

Χορός
εὖ γε νὴ τὸν Δία καὶ τὸν Ἀπόλλω καὶ τὴν Δήμητρα.

Δῆμος
κἀμοὶ δοκεῖ· καὶ τἄλλα γ᾽εἶναι καταφανῶς
ἀγαθὸς πολίτης, οἷος οὐδείς πω χρόνου
ἀνὴρ γεγένηται τοῖσι πολλοῖς τοὐβολοῦ. 945
σὺ δ᾽ὦ Παφλαγὼν φάσκων φιλεῖν μ᾽ἐσκορόδισας.
καὶ νῦν ἀπόδος τὸν δακτύλιον, ὡς οὐκέτι
ἐμοὶ ταμιεύσεις.

Κλέων
ἔχε· τοσοῦτον δ᾽ἴσθ᾽ὅτι,
εἰ μή μ᾽ἐάσεις ἐπιτροπεύειν, ἕτερος αὖ
ἐμοῦ πανουργότερός τις ἀναφανήσεται. 950

Δῆμος
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ὅπως ὁ δακτύλιός ἐσθ᾽οὑτοσὶ
οὑμός· τὸ γοῦν σημεῖον ἕτερον φαίνεται,
ἀλλ᾽ἢ οὐ καθορῶ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
φέρ᾽ἴδω τί σοι σημεῖον ἦν;

Δῆμος
δημοῦ βοείου θρῖον ἐξωπτημένον.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὐ τοῦτ᾽ἔνεστιν. 955

Δῆμος
οὐ τὸ θρῖον; ἀλλὰ τί;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
λάρος κεχηνὼς ἐπὶ πέτρας δημηγορῶν.

Δῆμος
αἰβοῖ τάλας.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τί ἔστιν;

Δῆμος
ἀπόφερ᾽ἐκποδών.
οὐ τὸν ἐμὸν εἶχεν ἀλλὰ τὸν Κλεωνύμου.
παρ᾽ἐμοῦ δὲ τουτονὶ λαβὼν ταμίευέ μοι.

Κλέων
μὴ δῆτά πώ γ᾽ὦ δέσποτ᾽, ἀντιβολῶ σ᾽ἐγώ,
πρὶν ἄν γε τῶν χρησμῶν ἀκούσῃς τῶν ἐμῶν.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ τῶν ἐμῶν νυν.

Κλέων
ἀλλ᾽ἐὰν τούτῳ πίθῃ,
μολγὸν γενέσθαι δεῖ σε.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
κἄν γε τουτῳί,
ψωλὸν γενέσθαι δεῖ σε μέχρι τοῦ μυρρίνου.

Κλέων
ἀλλ᾽οἵ γ᾽ἐμοὶ λέγουσιν ὡς ἄρξαι σε δεῖ
χώρας ἁπάσης ἐστεφανωμένον ῥόδοις.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὑμοὶ δέ γ᾽αὖ λέγουσιν ὡς ἀλουργίδα
ἔχων κατάπαστον καὶ στεφάνην ἐφ᾽ἅρματος
χρυσοῦ διώξει Σμικύθην καὶ κύριον.

Χορός
καὶ μὴν ἔνεγκ᾽αὐτοὺς ἰών, ἵν᾽οὑτοσὶ
αὐτῶν ἀκούσῃ.

Δῆμος
πάνυ γε. καὶ σύ νυν φέρε.

Κλέων
ἰδού.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἰδοὺ νὴ τὸν Δί᾽· οὐδὲν κωλύει.

Χορός
ἥδιστον φάος ἡμέρας
ἔσται τοῖσι παροῦσι καὶ
τοῖσι δεῦρ᾽ἀφικνουμένοις,
ἢν Κλέων ἀπόληται.
καίτοι πρεσβυτέρων τινῶν
οἵων ἀργαλεωτάτων
ἐν τῷ δείγματι τῶν δικῶν
ἤκουσ᾽ἀντιλεγόντων,
ὡς εἰ μὴ ᾽γένεθ᾽οὗτος ἐν
τῇ πόλει μέγας, οὐκ ἂν ἦστην
σκεύη δύο χρησίμω,
δοῖδυξ οὐδὲ τορύνη.
ἀλλὰ καὶ τόδ᾽ἔγωγε θαυμάζω
τῆς ὑομουσίας
αὐτοῦ· φασὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν οἱ
παῖδες οἳ ξυνεφοίτων,
τὴν Δωριστὶ μόνην ἂν ἁρμόττεσθαι
θαμὰ τὴν λύραν,
ἄλλην δ᾽οὐκ ἐθέλειν μαθεῖν·
κᾆτα τὸν κιθαριστὴν
ὀργισθέντ᾽ἀπάγειν κελεύειν,
ὡς ἁρμονίαν ὁ παῖς
οὗτος οὐ δύναται μαθεῖν
ἢν μὴ Δωροδοκιστί.

Κλέων
ἰδοὺ θέασαι, κοὐχ ἅπαντας ἐκφέρω.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οἴμ᾽ὡς χεσείω, κοὐχ ἅπαντας ἐκφέρω.

Δῆμος
ταυτὶ τί ἔστι;

Κλέων
λόγια.

Δῆμος
πάντ᾽;

Κλέων
ἐθαύμασας;
καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ἔτι γέ μοὔστι κιβωτὸς πλέα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐμοὶ δ᾽ὑπερῷον καὶ ξυνοικία δύο.

Δῆμος
φέρ᾽ἴδω, τίνος γάρ εἰσιν οἱ χρησμοί ποτε;

Κλέων
οὑμοὶ μέν εἰσι Βάκιδος.

Δῆμος
οἱ δὲ σοὶ τίνος;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
Γλάνιδος, ἀδελφοῦ τοῦ Βάκιδος γεραιτέρου.

Δῆμος
εἰσὶν δὲ περὶ τοῦ;

Κλέων
περὶ Ἀθηνῶν, περὶ Πύλου,
περὶ σοῦ, περὶ ἐμοῦ, περὶ ἁπάντων πραγμάτων.

Δῆμος
οἱ σοὶ δὲ περὶ τοῦ;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
περὶ Ἀθηνῶν, περὶ φακῆς,

περὶ Λακεδαιμονίων, περὶ σκόμβρων νέων,
περὶ τῶν μετρούντων τἄλφιτ᾽ἐν ἀγορᾷ κακῶς,
περὶ σοῦ, περὶ ἐμοῦ, περὶ ἁπάντων πραγμάτων.

Δῆμος
ἄγε νυν ὅπως αὐτοὺς ἀναγνώσεσθέ μοι,
καὶ τὸν περὶ ἐμοῦ ᾽κεῖνον ᾧπερ ἥδομαι,
ὡς ἐν νεφέλαισιν αἰετὸς γενήσομαι.

Κλέων
ἄκουε δή νυν καὶ πρόσεχε τὸν νοῦν ἐμοί.
φράζευ Ἐρεχθεΐδη λογίων ὁδόν, ἥν σοι Ἀπόλλων
ἴαχεν ἐξ ἀδύτοιο διὰ τριπόδων ἐριτίμων.
σῴζεσθαί σ᾽ἐκέλευσ᾽ἱερὸν κύνα καρχαρόδοντα,
ὃς πρὸ σέθεν λάσκων καὶ ὑπὲρ σοῦ δεινὰ κεκραγὼς
σοὶ μισθὸν ποριεῖ, κἂν μὴ δρᾷ ταῦτ᾽ἀπολεῖται.
πολλοὶ γὰρ μίσει σφε κατακρώζουσι κολοιοί.

Δῆμος
ταυτὶ μὰ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽ἐγὼ οὐκ οἶδ᾽ὅ τι λέγει.
τί γάρ ἐστ᾽Ἐρεχθεῖ καὶ κολοιοῖς καὶ κυνί;

Κλέων
ἐγὼ μέν εἰμ᾽ὁ κύων· πρὸ σοῦ γὰρ ἀπύω·
σοὶ δ᾽εἶπε σῴζεσθαί μ᾽ὁ Φοῖβος τὸν κύνα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὐ τοῦτό φησ᾽ὁ χρησμός, ἀλλ᾽ὁ κύων ὁδὶ
ὥσπερ θύρας σοῦ τῶν λογίων παρεσθίει.
ἐμοὶ γάρ ἐστ᾽ὀρθῶς περὶ τούτου τοῦ κυνός.

Δῆμος
λέγε νυν· ἐγὼ δὲ πρῶτα λήψομαι λίθον,
ἵνα μή μ᾽ὁ χρησμὸς τὸ πέος οὐτοσὶ δάκῃ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
φράζευ Ἐρεχθεΐδη κύνα Κέρβερον ἀνδραποδιστήν,

ὃς κέρκῳ σαίνων σ᾽ὁπόταν δειπνῇς ἐπιτηρῶν
ἐξέδεταί σου τοὔψον, ὅταν σύ ποι ἄλλοσε χάσκῃς·
ἐσφοιτῶν τ᾽ἐς τοὐπτάνιον λήσει σε κυνηδὸν
νύκτωρ τὰς λοπάδας καὶ τὰς νήσους διαλείχων.

Δῆμος
νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ πολύ γ᾽ἄμεινον ὦ Γλάνι.

Κλέων
ὦ τᾶν ἄκουσον, εἶτα διάκρινον τόδε.
ἔστι γυνή, τέξει δὲ λέονθ᾽ἱεραῖς ἐν Ἀθήναις,
ὃς περὶ τοῦ δήμου πολλοῖς κώνωψι μαχεῖται
ὥστε περὶ σκύμνοισι βεβηκώς· τὸν σὺ φυλάξαι,
τεῖχος ποιήσας ξύλινον πύργους τε σιδηροῦς.
ταῦτ᾽οἶσθ᾽ὅ τι λέγει;

Δῆμος
μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω ᾽γὼ μὲν οὔ.

Κλέων
ἔφραζεν ὁ θεός σοι σαφῶς σῴζειν ἐμέ·
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀντὶ τοῦ λέοντός εἰμί σοι.

Δῆμος
καὶ πῶς μ᾽ἐλελήθης Ἀντιλέων γεγενημένος;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἓν οὐκ ἀναδιδάσκει σε τῶν λογίων ἑκών,
ὃ μόνον σιδηροῦν ἐστι τεῖχος καὶ ξύλον,
ἐν ᾧ σε σῴζειν τόνδ᾽ἐκέλευσ᾽ὁ Λοξίας.

Δῆμος
πῶς δῆτα τοῦτ᾽ἔφραζεν ὁ θεός;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τουτονὶ
δῆσαί σ᾽ἐκέλευ᾽ἐν πεντεσυρίγγῳ ξύλῳ.

Δῆμος

ταυτὶ τελεῖσθαι τὰ λόγι᾽ ἤδη μοι δοκεῖ.

Κλέων
μὴ πείθου· φθονεραὶ γὰρ ἐπικρώζουσι κορῶναι.
ἀλλ᾽ ἱέρακα φίλει μεμνημένος ἐν φρεσὶν ὅς σοι
ἤγαγε συνδήσας Λακεδαιμονίων κορακίνους.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τοῦτό γέ τοι Παφλαγὼν παρεκινδύνευσε μεθυσθείς.
Κεκροπίδη κακόβουλε τί τοῦθ᾽ ἡγεῖ μέγα τοὔργον;
καί κε γυνὴ φέροι ἄχθος, ἐπεί κεν ἀνὴρ ἀναθείη·
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἂν μαχέσαιτο· χέσαιτο γάρ, εἰ μαχέσαιτο.

Κλέων
ἀλλὰ τόδε φράσσαι, πρὸ Πύλου Πύλον ἥν σοι ἔφραζεν.
ἔστι Πύλος πρὸ Πύλοιο —

Δῆμος
τί τοῦτο λέγει, πρὸ Πύλοιο;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τὰς πυέλους φησὶν καταλήψεσθ᾽ ἐν βαλανείῳ.

Δῆμος
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἄλουτος τήμερον γενήσομαι;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὗτος γὰρ ἡμῶν τὰς πυέλους ἀφήρπασεν.
ἀλλ᾽ οὑτοσὶ γάρ ἐστι περὶ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ
ὁ χρησμός, ᾧ σε δεῖ προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν πάνυ.

Δῆμος
προσέχω· σὺ δ᾽ ἀναγίγνωσκε, τοῖς ναύταισί μου
ὅπως ὁ μισθὸς πρῶτον ἀποδοθήσεται.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
Αἰγεΐδη φράσσαι κυναλώπεκα, μή σε δολώσῃ,
λαίθαργον ταχύπουν, δολίαν κερδὼ πολύιδριν.
οἶσθ᾽ ὅ τι ἐστὶν τοῦτο;

Δῆμος
Φιλόστρατος ἡ κυναλώπηξ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὐ τοῦτό φησιν, ἀλλὰ ναῦς ἑκάστοτε
αἰτεῖ ταχείας ἀργυρολόγους οὑτοσί·
ταύτας ἀπαυδᾷ μὴ διδόναι σ᾽ὁ Λοξίας.

Δῆμος
πῶς δὴ τριήρης ἐστὶ κυναλώπηξ;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὅπως;
ὅτι ἡ τριήρης ἐστὶ χὠ κύων ταχύ.

Δῆμος
πῶς οὖν ἀλώπηξ προσετέθη πρὸς τῷ κυνί;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἀλωπεκίοισι τοὺς στρατιώτας ἤκασεν,
ὁτιὴ βότρυς τρώγουσιν ἐν τοῖς χωρίοις.

Δῆμος
εἶεν·
τούτοις ὁ μισθὸς τοῖς ἀλωπεκίοισι ποῦ;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐγὼ πορῶ, καὶ τοῦτον ἡμερῶν τριῶν.
ἀλλ᾽ἔτι τόνδ᾽ἐπάκουσον, ὃν εἶπέ σοι ἐξαλέασθαι
χρησμὸν Λητοΐδης, Κυλλήνην, μή σε δολώσῃ.

Δῆμος
ποίαν Κυλλήνην;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τὴν τούτου χεῖρ᾽ἐποίησεν
Κυλλήνην ὀρθῶς, ὁτιή φησ᾽, "ἔμβαλε κυλλῇ".

Κλέων

οὐκ ὀρθῶς φράζει· τὴν Κυλλήνην γὰρ ὁ Φοῖβος
ἐς τὴν χεῖρ᾽ ὀρθῶς ᾐνίξατο τὴν Διοπείθους.
ἀλλὰ γάρ ἐστιν ἐμοὶ χρησμὸς περὶ σοῦ πτερυγωτός,
αἰετὸς ὡς γίγνει καὶ πάσης γῆς βασιλεύεις.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ γὰρ ἐμοί· καὶ γῆς καὶ τῆς ἐρυθρᾶς γε θαλάσσης,
χὤτι γ᾽ ἐν Ἐκβατάνοις δικάσεις, λείχων ἐπίπαστα.

Κλέων
ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ εἶδον ὄναρ, καί μοὐδόκει ἡ θεὸς αὐτὴ
τοῦ δήμου καταχεῖν ἀρυταίνῃ πλουθυγίειαν.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
νὴ Δία καὶ γὰρ ἐγώ· καί μοὐδόκει ἡ θεὸς αὐτὴ
ἐκ πόλεως ἐλθεῖν καὶ γλαῦξ αὐτῇ ᾽πικαθῆσθαι·
εἶτα κατασπένδειν κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀρυβάλλῳ
ἀμβροσίαν κατὰ σοῦ, κατὰ τούτου δὲ σκοροδάλμην.

Δῆμος
ἰοὺ ἰού.
οὐκ ἦν ἄρ᾽ οὐδεὶς τοῦ Γλάνιδος σοφώτερος.
καὶ νῦν ἐμαυτὸν ἐπιτρέπω σοι τουτονὶ
γερονταγωγεῖν κἀναπαιδεύειν πάλιν.

Κλέων
μήπω γ᾽, ἱκετεύω σ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἀνάμεινον, ὡς ἐγὼ
κριθὰς πορῶ σοι καὶ βίον καθ᾽ ἡμέραν.

Δῆμος
οὐκ ἀνέχομαι κριθῶν ἀκούων· πολλάκις
ἐξηπατήθην ὑπό τε σοῦ καὶ Θουφάνους.

Κλέων
ἀλλ᾽ ἄλφιτ᾽ ἤδη σοι πορῶ ᾽σκευασμένα.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης

ἐγὼ δὲ μαζίσκας γε διαμεμαγμένας
καὶ τοὔψον ὀπτόν· μηδὲν ἄλλ᾽εἰ μὴ ᾽σθιε.

Δῆμος
ἀνύσατέ νυν ὅ τι περ ποιήσεθ᾽· ὡς ἐγώ,
ὁπότερος ἂν σφῷν νῦν με μᾶλλον εὖ ποιῇ,
τούτῳ παραδώσω τῆς πυκνὸς τὰς ἡνίας.

Κλέων
τρέχοιμ᾽ἂν εἴσω πρότερος.
Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὐ δῆτ᾽ἀλλ᾽ἐγώ.

Χορός
ὦ Δῆμε καλήν γ᾽ἔχεις
ἀρχήν, ὅτε πάντες ἄνθρωποι
δεδίασί σ᾽ὥσπερ
ἄνδρα τύραννον.
ἀλλ᾽εὐπαράγωγος εἶ,
θωπευόμενός τε χαίρεις
κἀξαπατώμενος,
πρὸς τόν τε λέγοντ᾽ἀεὶ
κέχηνας· ὁ νοῦς δέ σου
παρὼν ἀποδημεῖ.

Δῆμος
νοῦς οὐκ ἔνι ταῖς κόμαις
ὑμῶν, ὅτε μ᾽οὐ φρονεῖν
νομίζετ᾽· ἐγὼ δ᾽ἑκὼν
ταῦτ᾽ἠλιθιάζω.
αὐτός τε γὰρ ἥδομαι
βρύλλων τὸ καθ᾽ἡμέραν,
κλέπτοντά τε βούλομαι
τρέφειν ἕνα προστάτην·
τοῦτον δ᾽, ὅταν ᾖ πλέως,
ἄρας ἐπάταξα.

Χορός
χοὕτω μὲν ἂν εὖ ποιοῖς,

εἴ σοι πυκνότης ἔνεστ᾽
ἐν τῷ τρόπῳ, ὡς λέγεις,
τούτῳ πάνυ πολλή,
εἰ τούσδ᾽ἐπίτηδες ὥσπερ
δημοσίους τρέφεις
ἐν τῇ πυκνί, κᾆθ᾽ὅταν
μή σοι τύχῃ ὄψον ὄν,
τούτων ὃς ἂν ᾖ παχύς,
θύσας ἐπιδειπνεῖς.

Δῆμος
σκέψασθε δέ μ᾽, εἰ σοφῶς
αὐτοὺς περιέρχομαι
τοὺς οἰομένους φρονεῖν
κἄμ᾽ἐξαπατύλλειν.
τηρῶ γὰρ ἑκάστοτ᾽αὐτοὺς
οὐδὲ δοκῶν ὁρᾶν
κλέπτοντας· ἔπειτ᾽ἀναγκάζω
πάλιν ἐξεμεῖν
ἅττ᾽ἂν κεκλόφωσί μου,
κημὸν καταμηλῶν.

Κλέων
ἄπαγ᾽ἐς μακαρίαν ἐκποδών.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
σύ γ᾽ὦ φθόρε.

Κλέων
ὦ Δῆμ᾽ἐγὼ μέντοι παρεσκευασμένος
τρίπαλαι κάθημαι βουλόμενός σ᾽εὐεργετεῖν.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐγὼ δὲ δεκάπαλαί γε καὶ δωδεκάπαλαι
καὶ χιλιόπαλαι καὶ προπαλαιπαλαίπαλαι.

Δῆμος
ἐγὼ δὲ προσδοκῶν γε τρισμυριόπαλαι
βδελύττομαί σφω καὶ προπαλαιπαλαίπαλαι.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οἶσθ᾽οὖν ὃ δρᾶσον;

Δῆμος
εἰ δὲ μή, φράσεις γε σύ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἄφες ἀπὸ βαλβίδων ἐμέ τε καὶ τουτονί,
ἵνα σ᾽εὖ ποιῶμεν ἐξ ἴσου.

Δῆμος
δρᾶν ταῦτα χρή.
ἄπιτον.

Κλέων καὶ Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἰδού.

Δῆμος
θέοιτ᾽ἄν.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὑποθεῖν οὐκ ἐῶ.

Δῆμος
ἀλλ᾽ἢ μεγάλως εὐδαιμονήσω τήμερον
ὑπὸ τῶν ἐραστῶν νὴ Δί᾽ἢ ᾽γὼ θρύψομαι.

Κλέων
ὁρᾷς; ἐγώ σοι πρότερος ἐκφέρω δίφρον.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἀλλ᾽οὐ τράπεζαν, ἀλλ᾽ἐγὼ προτεραίτερος.

Κλέων
ἰδοὺ φέρω σοι τήνδε μαζίσκην ἐγὼ
ἐκ τῶν ὀλῶν τῶν ἐκ Πύλου μεμαγμένην.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐγὼ δὲ μυστίλας μεμυστιλημένας
ὑπὸ τῆς θεοῦ τῇ χειρὶ τὴλεφαντίνῃ.

Δῆμος
ὡς μέγαν ἄρ᾽εἶχες ὦ πότνια τὸν δάκτυλον.

Κλέων
ἐγὼ δ᾽ἔτνος γε πίσινον εὔχρων καὶ καλόν·
ἐτόρυνε δ᾽αὖθ᾽ἡ Παλλὰς ἡ Πυλαιμάχος.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὦ Δῆμ᾽ἐναργῶς ἡ θεός σ᾽ἐπισκοπεῖ,
καὶ νῦν ὑπερέχει σου χύτραν ζωμοῦ πλέαν.

Δῆμος
οἴει γὰρ οἰκεῖσθ᾽ἂν ἔτι τήνδε τὴν πόλιν,
εἰ μὴ φανερῶς ἡμῶν ὑπερεῖχε τὴν χύτραν;

Κλέων
Τουτὶ τέμαχός σοὔδωκεν ἡ Φοβεσιστράτη.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἡ δ᾽Ὀβριμοπάτρα γ᾽ἐφθὸν ἐκ ζωμοῦ κρέας
καὶ χόλικος ἠνύστρου τε καὶ γαστρὸς τόμον.

Δῆμος
Καλῶς γ᾽ἐποίησε τοῦ πέπλου μεμνημένη.

Κλέων
ἡ Γοργολόφα σ᾽ἐκέλευε τουτουὶ φαγεῖν
ἐλατῆρος, ἵνα τὰς ναῦς ἐλαύνωμεν καλῶς.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
λαβὲ καὶ ταδί νυν.

Δῆμος
καὶ τί τούτοις χρήσομαι
τοῖς ἐντέροις;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐπίτηδες αὖτ᾽ἔπεμψέ σοι

ἐς τὰς τριήρεις ἐντερόνειαν ἡ θεός·
ἐπισκοπεῖ γὰρ περιφανῶς τὸ ναυτικόν.
ἔχε καὶ πιεῖν κεκραμένον τρία καὶ δύο.

Δῆμος
ὡς ἡδὺς ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ τὰ τρία φέρων καλῶς.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἡ Τριτογενὴς γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐνετριτώνισεν.

Κλέων
λαβέ νυν πλακοῦντος πίονος παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ τόμον.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ δ᾽ ὅλον γε τὸν πλακοῦντα τουτονί.

Κλέων
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ λαγῷ᾽ ἕξεις ὁπόθεν δῷς, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγώ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οἴμοι, πόθεν λαγῷά μοι γενήσεται;
ὦ θυμὲ νυνὶ βωμολόχον ἕξευρέ τι.

Κλέων
ὁρᾷς τάδ᾽ ὦ κακόδαιμον;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὀλίγον μοι μέλει·
ἐκεινοὶ γὰρ ὡς ἔμ᾽ ἔρχονταί τινες
πρέσβεις ἔχοντες ἀργυρίου βαλλάντια.

Κλέων
ποῦ ποῦ; toto

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τί δέ σοι τοῦτ᾽; οὐκ ἐάσεις τοὺς ξένους;
ὦ Δημίδιον ὁρᾷς τὰ λαγῷ᾽ ἃ σοι φέρω;

Κλέων
οἴμοι τάλας ἀδίκως γε τἄμ᾽ ὑφήρπασας.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ καὶ σὺ γὰρ τοὺς ἐκ Πύλου. toto

Δῆμος
εἶπ᾽, ἀντιβολῶ, πῶς ἐπενόησας ἁρπάσαι;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τὸ μὲν νόημα τῆς θεοῦ, τὸ δὲ κλέμμ᾽ ἐμόν.

Κλέων
ἐγὼ δ᾽ἐκινδύνευσ᾽, ἐγὼ δ᾽ὤπτησά γε.

Δῆμος
ἄπιθ᾽· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλὰ τοῦ παραθέντος ἡ χάρις.

Κλέων
οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ὑπεραναιδευθήσομαι.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τί οὐ διακρίνεις Δῆμ᾽ὁπότερός ἐστι νῷν
ἀνὴρ ἀμείνων περὶ σὲ καὶ τὴν γαστέρα;

Δῆμος
τῷ δῆτ᾽ἂν ὑμᾶς χρησάμενος τεκμηρίῳ
δόξαιμι κρίνειν τοῖς θεαταῖσιν σοφῶς;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐγὼ φράσω σοι. τὴν ἐμὴν κίστην ἰὼν
ξύλλαβε σιωπῇ καὶ βασάνισον ἅττ᾽ἔνι,
καὶ τὴν Παφλαγόνος· κἀμέλει κρινεῖς καλῶς.

Δῆμος
φέρ᾽ἴδω τί οὖν ἔνεστιν;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὐχ ὁρᾷς κενὴν
ὦ παππίδιον; ἅπαντα γάρ σοι παρεφόρουν.

Δῆμος
αὕτη μὲν ἡ κίστη τὰ τοῦ Δήμου φρονεῖ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
βάδιζέ νυν καὶ δεῦρο πρὸς τὴν Παφλαγόνος.
ὁρᾷς <τάδ᾽;>

Δῆμος
οἴμοι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ὅσων πλέα.
ὅσον τὸ χρῆμα τοῦ πλακοῦντος ἀπέθετο·
ἐμοὶ δ᾽ἔδωκεν ἀποτεμὼν τυννουτονί.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τοιαῦτα μέντοι καὶ πρότερόν σ᾽ἠργάζετο·
σοὶ μὲν προσεδίδου μικρὸν ὧν ἐλάμβανεν,
αὐτὸς δ᾽ἑαυτῷ παρετίθει τὰ μείζονα.

Δῆμος
ὦ μιαρὲ κλέπτων δή με ταῦτ᾽ἐξηπάτας;
ἐγὼ δέ τυ ἐστεφάνιξα κἀδωρησάμαν.

Κλέων
ἐγὼ δ᾽ἔκλεπτον ἐπ᾽ἀγαθῷ γε τῇ πόλει.

Δῆμος
κατάθου ταχέως τὸν στέφανον, ἵν᾽ἐγὼ τουτῳὶ
αὐτὸν περιθῶ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
κατάθου ταχέως μαστιγία.

Κλέων
οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἐπεί μοι χρησμός ἐστι Πυθικὸς
φράζων ὑφ᾽οὗ "δεήσει μ᾽" ἡττᾶσθαι μόνου.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τοὐμόν γε φράζων ὄνομα καὶ λίαν σαφῶς.

Κλέων

καὶ μήν σ᾽ἐλέγξαι βούλομαι τεκμηρίῳ,
εἴ τι ξυνοίσεις τοῦ θεοῦ τοῖς θεσφάτοις.
καί σου τοσοῦτον πρῶτον ἐκπειράσομαι·
παῖς ὢν ἐφοίτας ἐς τίνος διδασκάλου;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐν ταῖσιν εὔστραις κονδύλοις ἠρμοττόμην.

Κλέων
πῶς εἶπας; ὥς μου χρησμὸς ἅπτεται φρενῶν.
εἶεν.
ἐν παιδοτρίβου δὲ τίνα πάλην ἐμάνθανες;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
κλέπτων ἐπιορκεῖν καὶ βλέπειν ἐναντίον·

Κλέων
ὦ Φοῖβ᾽Ἄπολλον Λύκιε τί ποτέ μ᾽ἐργάσει;
τέχνην δὲ τίνα ποτ᾽εἶχες ἐξανδρούμενος;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἠλλαντοπώλουν καί τι καὶ βινεσκόμην.

Κλέων
οἴμοι κακοδαίμων· οὐκέτ᾽οὐδέν εἰμ᾽ἐγώ.
λεπτή τις ἐλπίς ἐστ᾽ἐφ᾽ἧς ὀχούμεθα.
καί μοι τοσοῦτον εἰπέ· πότερον ἐν ἀγορᾷ
ἠλλαντοπώλεις ἐτεὸν ἢ ᾽πὶ ταῖς πύλαις;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐπὶ ταῖς πύλαισιν, οὗ τὸ τάριχος ὤνιον.

Κλέων
οἴμοι πέπρακται τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ θέσφατον.
κυλίνδετ᾽εἴσω τόνδε τὸν δυσδαίμονα.
ὦ στέφανε χαίρων ἄπιθι, κεἴ σ᾽ἄκων ἐγὼ
λείπω· σὲ δ᾽ἄλλος τις λαβὼν κεκτήσεται,
κλέπτης μὲν οὐκ ἂν μᾶλλον, εὐτυχὴς δ᾽ἴσως.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
Ἑλλάνιε Ζεῦ σὸν τὸ νικητήριον.

Χορός
ὦ χαῖρε καλλίνικε καὶ μέμνησ᾽ ὅτι
ἀνὴρ γεγένησαι δι᾽ ἐμέ· καί σ᾽ αἰτῶ βραχύ,
ὅπως ἔσομαί σοι Φανὸς ὑπογραφεὺς δικῶν.

Δῆμος
ἐμοὶ δέ γ᾽ ὅ τι σοι τοὔνομ᾽ εἶπ᾽.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
Ἀγοράκριτος·
ἐν τἀγορᾷ γὰρ κρινόμενος ἐβοσκόμην.

Δῆμος
Ἀγορακρίτῳ τοίνυν ἐμαυτὸν ἐπιτρέπω,
καὶ τὸν Παφλαγόνα παραδίδωμι τουτονί.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ μὴν ἐγώ σ᾽ ὦ Δῆμε θεραπεύσω καλῶς,
ὥσθ᾽ ὁμολογεῖν σε μηδέν᾽ ἀνθρώπων ἐμοῦ
ἰδεῖν ἀμείνω τῇ Κεχηναίων πόλει.

Χορός
τί κάλλιον ἀρχομένοισιν
ἢ καταπαυομένοισιν
ἢ θοᾶν ἵππων ἐλατῆρας ἀείδειν, "μηδὲν ἐς" Λυσίστρατον,
μηδὲ Θούμαντιν τὸν ἀνέστιον αὖ λυπεῖν ἐκούσῃ καρδίᾳ;
καὶ γὰρ οὗτος ὦ φίλ᾽ Ἄπολλον <ἀεὶ> πεινῇ, θαλεροῖς δακρύοις
σᾶς ἀπτόμενος φαρέτρας Πυθῶνι δίᾳ μὴ κακῶς πένεσθαι.
λοιδορῆσαι τοὺς πονηροὺς οὐδέν ἐστ᾽ ἐπίφθονον,
ἀλλὰ τιμὴ τοῖσι χρηστοῖς, ὅστις εὖ λογίζεται.
εἰ μὲν οὖν ἄνθρωπος, ὃν δεῖ πόλλ᾽ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ κακά,
αὐτὸς ἦν ἔνδηλος, οὐκ ἂν ἀνδρὸς ἐμνήσθην φίλου.
νῦν δ᾽ Ἀρίγνωτον γὰρ οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐκ ἐπίσταται,
ὅστις ἢ τὸ λευκὸν οἶδεν ἢ τὸν ὄρθιον νόμον.
ἔστιν οὖν ἀδελφὸς αὐτῷ τοὺς τρόπους οὐ συγγενής,
Ἀριφράδης πονηρός. ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν καὶ βούλεται·

ἔστι δ᾽οὐ μόνον πονηρός, οὐ γὰρ οὐδ᾽ἂν ᾐσθόμην,
οὐδὲ παμπόνηρος, ἀλλὰ καὶ προσεξηύρηκέ τι.
τὴν γὰρ αὐτοῦ γλῶτταν αἰσχραῖς ἡδοναῖς λυμαίνεται,
ἐν κασωρείοισι λείχων τὴν ἀπόπτυστον δρόσον,
καὶ μολύνων τὴν ὑπήνην καὶ κυκῶν τὰς ἐσχάρας,
καὶ Πολυμνήστεια ποιῶν καὶ ξυνὼν Οἰωνίχῳ.
ὅστις οὖν τοιοῦτον ἄνδρα μὴ σφόδρα βδελύττεται,
οὔ ποτ᾽ἐκ ταὐτοῦ μεθ᾽ἡμῶν πίεται ποτηρίου.
ἦ πολλάκις ἐννυχίαισι
φροντίσι συγγεγένημαι,
καὶ διεζήτηχ᾽ὁπόθεν ποτὲ φαύλως ἐσθίει Κλεώνυμος.
φασὶ <μὲν> γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐρεπτόμενον τὰ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀνέρων
οὐκ ἂν ἐξελθεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς σιπύης· τοὺς δ᾽ἀντιβολεῖν ἂν ὅμως·
“ἴθ᾽ὦ ἄνα πρὸς γονάτων, ἔξελθε καὶ σύγγνωθι τῇ τραπέζῃ”.
φασὶν ἀλλήλαις ξυνελθεῖν τὰς τριήρεις ἐς λόγον,
καὶ μίαν λέξαι τιν᾽αὐτῶν ἥτις ἦν γεραιτέρα·
“οὐδὲ πυνθάνεσθε ταῦτ᾽ὦ παρθένοι τὰν τῇ πόλει;
φασὶν αἰτεῖσθαί τιν᾽ἡμῶν ἑκατὸν ἐς Καρχηδόνα
ἄνδρα μοχθηρὸν πολίτην ὀξίνην Ὑπέρβολον”·
ταῖς δὲ δόξαι δεινὸν εἶναι τοῦτο κοὐκ ἀνασχετόν,
καί τιν᾽εἰπεῖν ἥτις ἀνδρῶν ἧσσον οὐκ ἐληλύθει·
“ἀποτρόπαὶ οὐ δῆτ᾽ἐμοῦ γ᾽ἄρξει ποτ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ἐάν με χρῇ,
ὑπὸ τερηδόνων σαπεῖσ᾽ἐνταῦθα καταγηράσομαι”·
“οὐδὲ Ναυφάντης γε τῆς Ναύσωνος, οὐ δῆτ᾽ὦ θεοί,
εἴπερ ἐκ πεύκης γε κἀγὼ καὶ ξύλων ἐπηγνύμην.
ἦν δ᾽ἀρέσκῃ ταῦτ᾽Ἀθηναίοις, καθῆσθαί μοι δοκεῖ
ἐς τὸ Θησεῖον πλεούσαις ἢ ᾽πὶ τῶν σεμνῶν θεῶν.
οὐ γὰρ ἡμῶν γε στρατηγῶν ἐγχανεῖται τῇ πόλει·
ἀλλὰ πλείτω χωρὶς αὐτὸς ἐς κόρακας, εἰ βούλεται,
τὰς σκάφας, ἐν αἷς ἐπώλει τοὺς λύχνους, καθελκύσας”.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
εὐφημεῖν χρὴ καὶ στόμα κλῄειν καὶ μαρτυριῶν ἀπέχεσθαι,
καὶ τὰ δικαστήρια συγκλῄειν οἷς ἡ πόλις ἥδε γέγηθεν,
ἐπὶ καιναῖσιν δ᾽εὐτυχίαισιν παιωνίζειν τὸ θέατρον.

Χορός

ὦ ταῖς ἱεραῖς φέγγος Ἀθήναις καὶ ταῖς νήσοις ἐπίκουρε,
τίν᾽ ἔχων φήμην ἀγαθὴν ἥκεις, ἐφ᾽ ὅτῳ κνισῶμεν ἀγυιάς;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τὸν Δῆμον ἀφεψήσας ὑμῖν καλὸν ἐξ αἰσχροῦ πεποίηκα.

Χορός
καὶ ποῦ ᾽στιν νῦν ὦ θαυμαστὰς ἐξευρίσκων ἐπινοίας;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐν ταῖσιν ἰοστεφάνοις οἰκεῖ ταῖς ἀρχαίαισιν Ἀθήναις.

Χορός
πῶς ἂν ἴδοιμεν; ποίαν <τιν᾽> ἔχει σκευήν; ποῖος γεγένηται;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οἷός περ Ἀριστείδῃ πρότερον καὶ Μιλτιάδῃ ξυνεσίτει.
ὄψεσθε δέ· καὶ γὰρ ἀνοιγνυμένων ψόφος ἤδη τῶν προπυλαίων.
ἀλλ᾽ ὀλολύξατε φαινομέναισιν ταῖς ἀρχαίαισιν Ἀθήναις
καὶ θαυμασταῖς καὶ πολυύμνοις, ἵν᾽ ὁ κλεινὸς Δῆμος ἐνοικεῖ.

Χορός
ὦ ταὶ λιπαραὶ καὶ ἰοστέφανοι καὶ ἀριζήλωτοι Ἀθῆναι,
δείξατε τὸν τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὑμῖν καὶ τῆς γῆς τῆσδε μόναρχον.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ὅδ᾽ ἐκεῖνος ὁρᾶν τεττιγοφόρας, ἀρχαίῳ σχήματι λαμπρός,
οὐ χοιρινῶν ὄζων ἀλλὰ σπονδῶν, σμύρνῃ κατάλειπτος.

Χορός
χαῖρ᾽ ὦ βασιλεῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων· καί σοι ξυγχαίρομεν ἡμεῖς.
τῆς γὰρ πόλεως ἄξια πράττεις καὶ τοῦ ᾽ν Μαραθῶνι τροπαίου.

Δῆμος
ὦ φίλτατ᾽ ἀνδρῶν ἐλθὲ δεῦρ᾽ Ἀγοράκριτε.
ὅσα με δέδρακας ἀγάθ᾽ ἀφεψήσας.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἐγώ;
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ μέλ᾽ οὐκ οἶσθ᾽ οἷος ἦσθ᾽ αὐτὸς πάρος,

οὐδ᾽οἵ᾽ἔδρας· ἐμὲ γὰρ νομίζοις ἂν θεόν.

Δῆμος
τί δ᾽ἔδρων, κάτειπέ μοι, πρὸ τοῦ; ποῖός τις ἦ;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
πρῶτον μέν, ὁπότ᾽εἴποι τις ἐν τῐκκλησίᾳ,
"ὦ Δῆμ᾽ἐραστής εἰμι σὸς φιλῶ τέ σε
καὶ κήδομαί σου καὶ προβουλεύω μόνος",
τούτοις ὁπότε χρήσαιτό τις προοιμίοις,
ἀνωρτάλιζες κἀκερουτίας.

Δῆμος
ἐγώ;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
εἶτ᾽ἐξαπατήσας σ᾽ἀντὶ τούτων ᾤχετο.

Δῆμος
τί φῄς;
ταυτί μ᾽ἔδρων, ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτ᾽οὐκ ᾐσθόμην;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τὰ δ᾽ὦτά γ᾽ἄν σου νὴ Δί᾽ἐξεπετάννυτο
ὥσπερ σκιάδειον καὶ πάλιν ξυνήγετο.

Δῆμος
οὕτως ἀνόητος ἐγεγενήμην καὶ γέρων;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
καὶ νὴ Δί᾽εἴ γε δύο λεγοίτην ῥήτορε,
ὁ μὲν ποιεῖσθαι ναῦς μακρὰς ὁ δ᾽ἕτερος αὖ
καταμισθοφορῆσαι τοῦθ᾽, ὁ τὸν μισθὸν λέγων
τὸν τὰς τριήρεις παραδραμὼν ἂν ᾤχετο.
οὗτος τί κύπτεις; οὐχὶ κατὰ χώραν μενεῖς;

Δῆμος
αἰσχύνομαί τοι ταῖς πρότερον ἁμαρτίαις.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης

ἀλλ᾽οὐ σὺ τούτων αἴτιος, μὴ φροντίσῃς,
ἀλλ᾽οἵ σε ταῦτ᾽ἐξηπάτων. νυνδὶ φράσον·
ἐάν τις εἴπῃ βωμολόχος ξυνήγορος·
“οὐκ ἔστιν ὑμῖν τοῖς δικασταῖς ἄλφιτα,
εἰ μὴ καταγνώσεσθε ταύτην τὴν δίκην”· 1360
τοῦτον τί δράσεις, εἰπέ, τὸν ξυνήγορον;

Δῆμος
ἄρας μετέωρον ἐς τὸ βάραθρον ἐμβαλῶ,
ἐκ τοῦ λάρυγγος ἐκκρεμάσας Ὑπέρβολον.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τουτὶ μὲν ὀρθῶς καὶ φρονίμως ἤδη λέγεις·
τὰ δ᾽ἄλλα, φέρ᾽ἴδω, πῶς πολιτεύσει φράσον. 1365

Δῆμος
πρῶτον μὲν ὁπόσοι ναῦς ἐλαύνουσιν μακράς,
καταγομένοις τὸν μισθὸν ἀποδώσω ᾽ντελῆ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
Πολλοῖς γ᾽ὑπολίσφοις πυγιδίοισιν ἐχαρίσω.

Δῆμος
ἔπειθ᾽ὁπλίτης ἐντεθεὶς ἐν καταλόγῳ
οὐδεὶς κατὰ σπουδὰς μετεγγραφήσεται, 1370
ἀλλ᾽ὥσπερ ἦν τὸ πρῶτον ἐγγεγράψεται.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
τοῦτ᾽ἔδακε τὸν πόρπακα τὸν Κλεωνύμου.

Δῆμος
οὐδ᾽ἀγοράσει γ᾽ἀγένειος οὐδεὶς ἐν ἀγορᾷ.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ποῦ δῆτα Κλεισθένης ἀγοράσει καὶ Στράτων;

Δῆμος
τὰ μειράκια ταυτὶ λέγω τἀν τῷ μύρῳ, 1375

ἃ στωμυλεῖται τοιαδὶ καθήμενα·
“σοφός γ᾽ ὁ Φαίαξ δεξιῶς τ᾽οὐκ ἀπέθανεν.
συνερτικὸς γάρ ἐστι καὶ περαντικός,
καὶ γνωμοτυπικὸς καὶ σαφὴς καὶ κρουστικός,
καταληπτικός τ᾽ἄριστα τοῦ θορυβητικοῦ”.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὔκουν καταδακτυλικὸς σὺ τοῦ λαλητικοῦ;

Δῆμος
μὰ Δί᾽ἀλλ᾽ἀναγκάσω κυνηγετεῖν ἐγὼ
τούτους ἅπαντας, παυσαμένους ψηφισμάτων.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
ἔχε νυν ἐπὶ τούτοις τουτονὶ τὸν ὀκλαδίαν,
καὶ παῖδ᾽ἐνόρχην, ὅσπερ οἴσει τόνδε σοι·
κἄν που δοκῇ σοι, τοῦτον ὀκλαδίαν ποίει.

Δῆμος
μακάριος ἐς τἀρχαῖα δὴ καθίσταμαι.
Ἀλλαντοπώλης
φήσεις γ᾽, ἐπειδὰν τὰς τριακοντούτιδας
σπονδὰς παραδῶ σοι. δεῦρ᾽ἴθ᾽αἱ Σπονδαὶ ταχύ.

Δῆμος
ὦ Ζεῦ πολυτίμηθ᾽ὡς καλαί· πρὸς τῶν θεῶν,
ἔξεστιν αὐτῶν κατατριακοντουτίσαι;
πῶς ἔλαβες αὐτὰς ἐτέον;

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὐ γὰρ ὁ Παφλαγὼν
ἀπέκρυπτε ταύτας ἔνδον, ἵνα σὺ μὴ λάβῃς;
νῦν οὖν ἐγώ σοι παραδίδωμ᾽ἐς τοὺς ἀγροὺς
αὐτὰς ἰέναι λαβόντα.

Δῆμος
τὸν δὲ Παφλαγόνα,
ὃς ταῦτ᾽ἔδρασεν, εἴφ᾽ὅ τι ποιήσεις κακόν.

Ἀλλαντοπώλης
οὐδὲν μέγ᾽ἀλλ᾽ἢ τὴν ἐμὴν ἕξει τέχνην·
ἐπὶ ταῖς πύλαις ἀλλαντοπωλήσει μόνος,
τὰ κύνεια μιγνὺς τοῖς ὀνείοις πράγμασιν,
μεθύων τε ταῖς πόρναισι λοιδορήσεται,
κἀκ τῶν βαλανείων πίεται τὸ λούτριον.

Δῆμος
εὖ γ᾽ἐπενόησας οὗπέρ ἐστιν ἄξιος,
πόρναισι καὶ βαλανεῦσι διακεκραγέναι,
καί σ᾽ἀντὶ τούτων ἐς τὸ πρυτανεῖον καλῶ
ἐς τὴν ἕδραν θ᾽, ἵν᾽ἐκεῖνος ἦν ὁ φαρμακός.
ἔπου δὲ ταυτηνὶ λαβὼν τὴν βατραχίδα·
κἀκεῖνον ἐκφερέτω τις ὡς ἐπὶ τὴν τέχνην,
ἵν᾽ἴδωσιν αὐτὸν οἷς ἐλωβᾶθ᾽οἱ ξένοι.

THE CLOUDS

Στρεψιάδης
Ἰοὺ ἰού·
ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τὸ χρῆμα τῶν νυκτῶν ὅσον·
ἀπέραντον. Οὐδέποθ᾽ ἡμέρα γενήσεται ;
Καὶ μὴν πάλαι γ᾽ ἀλεκτρυόνος ἤκουσ᾽ ἐγώ.
Οἱ δ᾽ οἰκέται ῥέγκουσιν. Ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἂν πρὸ τοῦ. 5
Ἀπόλοιο δῆτ᾽, ὦ πόλεμε, πολλῶν οὕνεκα,
ὅτ᾽ οὐδὲ κολάσ᾽ ἔξεστί μοι τοὺς οἰκέτας.
Ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὁ χρηστὸς οὑτοσὶ νεανίας
ἐγείρεται τῆς νυκτός, ἀλλὰ πέρδεται
ἐν πέντε σισύραις ἐγκεκορδυλημένος. 10
Ἀλλ᾽ εἰ δοκεῖ, ῥέγκωμεν ἐγκεκαλυμμένοι.
Ἀλλ᾽ οὐ δύναμαι δείλαιος εὕδειν δακνόμενος
ὑπὸ τῆς δαπάνης καὶ τῆς φάτνης καὶ τῶν χρεῶν
διὰ τουτονὶ τὸν υἱόν δὲ κόμην ἔχων
ἱππάζεταί τε καὶ ξυνωρικεύεται 15
ὀνειροπολεῖ θ᾽ ἵππους. Ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀπόλλυμαι
ὁρῶν ἄγουσαν τὴν σελήνην εἰκάδας·
οἱ γὰρ τόκοι χωροῦσιν. Ἅπτε παῖ λύχνον
κἄκφερε τὸ γραμματεῖον, ἵν᾽ ἀναγνῶ λαβὼν
ὁπόσοις ὀφείλω καὶ λογίσωμαι τοὺς τόκους. 20
Φέρ᾽ ἴδω, τί ὀφείλω ; Δώδεκα μνᾶς Πασίᾳ.
Τοῦ δώδεκα μνᾶς Πασίᾳ ; Τί ἐχρησάμην ;
Ὅτ᾽ ἐπριάμην τὸν κοππατίαν. Οἴμοι τάλας,
εἴθ᾽ ἐξεκόπην πρότερον τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν λίθῳ.

Φειδιππίδης
Φίλων, ἀδικεῖς. Ἔλαυνε τὸν σαυτοῦ δρόμον.. 25

Στρεψιάδης
Τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ τουτὶ τὸ κακὸν ὅ μ᾽ ἀπολώλεκεν·
ὀνειροπολεῖ γὰρ καὶ καθεύδων ἱππικήν.

Φειδιππίδης
Πόσους δρόμους ἐλᾷ τὰ πολεμιστήρια

Στρεψιάδης
Ἐμὲ μὲν σὺ πολλοὺς τὸν πατέρ᾽ ἐλαύνεις δρόμους.
Ἀτὰρ τί χρέος ἔβα με μετὰ τὸν Πασίαν;
Τρεῖς μναῖ διφρίσκου καὶ τροχοῖν Ἀμεινίᾳ.

Φειδιππίδης
. Ἄπαγε τὸν ἵππον ἐξαλίσας οἴκαδε.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἀλλ᾽ ὦ μέλ᾽ ἐξήλικας ἐμέ γ᾽ ἐκ τῶν ἐμῶν,
ὅτε καὶ δίκας ὤφληκα χἄτεροι τόκου
ἐνεχυράσεσθαί φασιν.

Φειδιππίδης
Ἑτεόν, ὦ πάτερ,
τί δυσκολαίνεις καὶ στρέφει τὴν νύχθ᾽ ὅλην;

Στρεψιάδης
Δάκνει μέ τις δήμαρχος ἐκ τῶν στρωμάτων

Φειδιππίδης
Ἔασον ὦ δαιμόνιε καταδαρθεῖν τί με.

Στρεψιάδης
Σὺ δ᾽ οὖν κάθευδε. Τὰ δὲ χρέα ταῦτ᾽ ἴσθ᾽ ὅτι
εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν ἅπαντα τὴν σὴν τρέψεται.
Φεῦ.
Εἴθ᾽ ὤφελ᾽ ἡ προμνήστρι᾽ ἀπολέσθαι κακῶς
ἥτις με γῆμ᾽ ἐπῆρε τὴν σὴν μητέρα·
ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἦν ἄγροικος ἥδιστος βίος,
εὐρωτιῶν, ἀκόρητος, εἰκῇ κείμενος,
βρύων μελίτταις καὶ προβάτοις καὶ στεμφύλοις.
Ἔπειτ᾽ ἔγημα Μεγακλέους τοῦ Μεγακλέους
ἀδελφιδῆν ἄγροικος ὢν ἐξ ἄστεως,
σεμνήν, τρυφῶσαν, ἐγκεκοισυρωμένην.
Ταύτην ὅτ᾽ ἐγάμουν, συγκατεκλινόμην ἐγὼ
ὄζων τρυγός, τρασιᾶς, ἐρίων, περιουσίας,
ἡ δ᾽ αὖ μύρου, κρόκου, καταγλωττισμάτων,

δαπάνης, λαφυγμοῦ, Κωλιάδος, Γενετυλλίδος.
Οὐ μὴν ἐρῶ γ᾽ ὡς ἀργὸς ἦν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐσπάθα,
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἂν αὐτῇ θοἰμάτιον δεικνὺς τοδὶ
πρόφασιν ἔφασκον· ὦ γύναι, λίαν σπαθᾷς. 55

Θεράπων
Ἔλαιον ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔνεστ᾽ ἐν τῷ λύχνῳ.

Στρεψιάδης
Οἴμοι. Τί γάρ μοι τὸν πότην ἦπτες λύχνον ;
Δεῦρ᾽ ἔλθ᾽ ἵνα κλάῃς.

Θεράπων
Διὰ τί δῆτα κλαύσομαι ;

Στρεψιάδης
Ὅτι τῶν παχειῶν ἐνετίθεις θρυαλλίδων.
Μετὰ ταῦθ᾽, ὅπως νῷν ἐγένεθ᾽ υἱὸς οὑτοσί, 60
ἐμοί τε δὴ καὶ τῇ γυναικὶ τἀγαθῇ,
περὶ τοὐνόματος δὴ ᾽ντεῦθεν ἐλοιδορούμεθα.
ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἵππον προσετίθει πρὸς τοὔνομα,
Ξάνθιππον ἢ Χάριππον ἢ Καλλιππίδην,
ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦ πάππου ᾽τιθέμην Φειδωνίδην. 65
Τέως μὲν οὖν ἐκρινόμεθ᾽· εἶτα τῷ χρόνῳ
κοινῇ ξυνέβημεν κἀθέμεθα Φειδιππίδην.
Τοῦτον τὸν υἱὸν λαμβάνουσ᾽ ἐκορίζετο·
ὅταν σὺ μέγας ὢν ἅρμ᾽ ἐλαύνῃς πρὸς πόλιν,
ὥσπερ Μεγακλέης, ξυστίδ᾽ ἔχων ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἔφην· 70
ὅταν μὲν οὖν τὰς αἶγας ἐκ τοῦ φελλέως,
ὥσπερ ὁ πατήρ σου, διφθέραν ἐνημμένος.
Ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐπείθετο τοῖς ἐμοῖς οὐδὲν λόγοις,
ἀλλ᾽ ἵππερόν μου κατέχεεν τῶν χρημάτων. 75
Νῦν οὖν ὅλην τὴν νύκτα φροντίζων ὁδοῦ
μίαν ηὗρον ἀτραπὸν δαιμονίως ὑπερφυᾶ,
ἣν ἢν ἀναπείσω τουτονί, σωθήσομαι.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἐξεγεῖραι πρῶτον αὐτὸν βούλομαι.
Πῶς δῆτ᾽ ἂν ἥδιστ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐπεγείραιμι ; Πῶς ; 80

Φειδιππίδη, Φειδιππίδιον.

Φειδιππίδης
Τί, ὦ πάτερ;

Στρεψιάδης
Κύσον με καὶ τὴν χεῖρα δὸς τὴν δεξιάν.

Φειδιππίδης
ἰδού. Τί ἐστιν;

Στρεψιάδης
Εἰπέ μοι, φιλεῖς ἐμέ;

Φειδιππίδης
Νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ τουτονὶ τὸν ἵππιον.

Στρεψιάδης
Μή μοι γε τοῦτον μηδαμῶς τὸν ἵππιον·
οὗτος γὰρ ὁ θεὸς αἴτιός μοι τῶν κακῶν. 85
Ἀλλ᾽ εἴπερ ἐκ τῆς καρδίας μ᾽ ὄντως φιλεῖς,
ὦ παῖ πιθοῦ.

Φειδιππίδης
Τί οὖν πίθωμαι δῆτά σοι;

Στρεψιάδης
Ἕκτρεψον ὡς τάχιστα τοὺς σαυτοῦ τρόπους
καὶ μάνθαν᾽ ἐλθὼν ἃν ἐγὼ παραινέσω.

Φειδιππίδης
Λέγε δή, τί κελεύεις; 90

Στρεψιάδης
Καί τι πείσει;

Φειδιππίδης

Πείσομαι,
νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον.

Στρεψιάδης
Δεῦρό νυν ἀπόβλεπε.
Ὁρᾷς τὸ θύριον τοῦτο καὶ τοἰκίδιον;

Φειδιππίδης
Ὁρῶ. Τί οὖν τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἑτεόν, ὦ πάτερ;

Στρεψιάδης
Ψυχῶν σοφῶν τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ φροντιστήριον.
Ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἐνοικοῦσ᾽ ἄνδρες οἳ τὸν οὐρανὸν
λέγοντες ἀναπείθουσιν ὡς ἔστιν πνιγεύς,
κἄστιν περὶ ἡμᾶς οὗτος, ἡμεῖς δ᾽ἄνθρακες.
Οὗτοι διδάσκουσ᾽, ἀργύριον ἤν τις διδῷ,
λέγοντα νικᾶν καὶ δίκαια κἄδικα.

Φειδιππίδης
Εἰσὶν δὲ τίνες;

Στρεψιάδης
Οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ἀκριβῶς τοὔνομα.
Μεριμνοφροντισταὶ καλοί τε κἀγαθοί.

Φειδιππίδης
Αἰβοῖ, πονηροί γ᾽, οἶδα. Τοὺς ἀλαζόνας,
τοὺς ὠχριῶντας τοὺς ἀνυποδήτους λέγεις,
ὧν ὁ κακοδαίμων Σωκράτης καὶ Χαιρεφῶν.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἦ ἦ, σιώπα. Μηδὲν εἴπῃς νήπιον.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἴ τι κήδει τῶν πατρῴων ἀλφίτων,
τούτων γενοῦ μοι σχασάμενος τὴν ἱππικήν.

Φειδιππίδης
Οὐκ ἂν μὰ τὸν Διόνυσον εἰ δοίης γέ μοι
τοὺς φασιανοὺς οὓς τρέφει Λεωγόρας.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἰθ᾽, ἀντιβολῶ σ᾽, ὦ φίλτατ᾽ ἀνθρώπων ἐμοί,
ἐλθὼν διδάσκου.

Φειδιππίδης
Καὶ τί σοι μαθήσομαι;

Στρεψιάδης
Εἶναι παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς φασὶν ἄμφω τὼ λόγω,
τὸν κρείττον᾽, ὅστις ἐστί, καὶ τὸν ἥττονα.
Τούτοιν τὸν ἕτερον τοῖν λόγοιν, τὸν ἥττονα,
νικᾶν λέγοντά φασι τἀδικώτερα.
Ἢν οὖν μάθῃς μοι τὸν ἄδικον τοῦτον λόγον,
ἃ νῦν ὀφείλω διὰ σέ, τούτων τῶν χρεῶν
οὐκ ἂν ἀποδοίην οὐδ᾽ἂν ὀβολὸν οὐδενί.

Φειδιππίδης
Οὐκ ἂν πιθοίμην· οὐ γὰρ ἂν τλαίην ἰδεῖν
τοὺς ἱππέας τὸ χρῶμα διακεκναισμένος.

Στρεψιάδης
Οὐκ ἄρα μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα τῶν γ᾽ ἐμῶν ἔδει
οὔτ᾽αὐτὸς οὔθ᾽ὁ ζύγιος οὔθ᾽ὁ σαμφόρας:
ἀλλ᾽ἐξελῶ σ᾽ἐς κόρακας ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας.

Φειδιππίδης
Ἀλλ᾽ οὐ περιόψεταί μ᾽ ὁ θεῖος Μεγακλέης
ἄνιππον. ἀλλ᾽εἴσειμι, σοῦ δ᾽οὐ φροντιῶ.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἐγὼ μέντοι πεσών γε κείσομαι,
ἀλλ᾽ εὐξάμενος τοῖσιν θεοῖς διδάξομαι
αὐτὸς βαδίζων ἐς τὸ φροντιστήριον.
Πῶς οὖν γέρων ὢν κἀπιλήσμων καὶ βραδὺς
λόγων ἀκριβῶν σχινδαλάμους μαθήσομαι;
ἰτητέον. Τί ταῦτ᾽ ἔχων στραγγεύομαι

ἀλλ᾽οὐχὶ κόπτω τὴν θύραν; Παῖ, παιδίον.

Μαθητής
Βάλλ᾽ εἰς κόρακας. Τίς ἐσθ᾽ ὁ κόψας τὴν θύραν;

Στρεψιάδης
Φείδωνος υἱὸς Στρεψιάδης Κικυννόθεν.

Μαθητής
Ἀμαθής γε νὴ Δί᾽, ὅστις οὐτωσὶ σφόδρα
ἀπερι μερίμνως τὴν θύραν λελάκτικας
καὶ φροντίδ᾽ ἐξήμβλωκας ἐξηυρημένην.

Στρεψιάδης
Σύγγνωθί μοι· τηλοῦ γὰρ οἰκῶν τῶν ἀγρῶν.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἰπέ μοι τὸ πρᾶγμα τοὐξημβλωμένον.

Μαθητής
Ἀλλ᾽ οὐ θέμις πλὴν τοῖς μαθηταῖσιν λέγειν.

Στρεψιάδης
Λέγε νυν ἐμοὶ θαρρῶν· ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐτοσὶ
ἥκω μαθητὴς ἐς τὸ φροντιστήριον.

Μαθητής
Λέξω, νομίσαι δὲ ταῦτα χρὴ μυστήρια.
Ἀνήρετ᾽ ἄρτι Χαιρεφῶντα Σωκράτης
ψύλλαν ὁπόσους ἅλλοιτο τοὺς αὑτῆς πόδας:
Δακοῦσα γὰρ τοῦ Χαιρεφῶντος τὴν ὀφρῦν
ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τὴν Σωκράτους ἀφήλατο.

Στρεψιάδης
Πῶς δῆτα διεμέτρησε;

Μαθητής
Δεξιώτατα.
Κηρὸν διατήξας, εἶτα τὴν ψύλλαν λαβὼν
ἐνέβαψεν ἐς τὸν κηρὸν αὐτῆς τὼ πόδε,

κᾆτα ψυχείσῃ περιέφυσαν Περσικαί.
Ταύτας ὑπολύσας ἀνεμέτρει τὸ χωρίον.

Στρεψιάδης
Ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τῆς λεπτότητος τῶν φρενῶν.

Μαθητής
Τί δῆτ᾽ ἄν, ἕτερον εἰ πύθοιο Σωκράτους
φρόντισμα; 155

Στρεψιάδης
Ποῖον; Ἀντιβολῶ, κάτειπέ μοι.

Μαθητής
Ἀνήρετ᾽ αὐτὸν Χαιρεφῶν ὁ Σφήττιος
ὁπότερα τὴν γνώμην ἔχοι, τὰς ἐμπίδας
κατὰ τὸ στόμ᾽ ἆδειν ἢ κατὰ τοὐρροπύγιον.

Στρεψιάδης
Τί δῆτ᾽ ἐκεῖνος εἶπε περὶ τῆς ἐμπίδος;

Μαθητής
Ἐφασκεν εἶναι τοὔντερον τῆς ἐμπίδος 160
στενόν, διὰ λεπτοῦ δ᾽ ὄντος αὐτοῦ τὴν πνοὴν
βίᾳ βαδίζειν εὐθὺ τοὐρροπυγίου:
ἔπειτα κοῖλον πρὸς στενῷ προσκείμενον
τὸν πρωκτὸν ἠχεῖν ὑπὸ βίας τοῦ πνεύματος.

Στρεψιάδης
Σάλπιγξ ὁ πρωκτός ἐστιν ἄρα τῶν ἐμπίδων. 165
Ὦ τρισμακάριος τοῦ διεντερεύματος.
Ἡ ῥᾳδίως φεύγων ἂν ἀποφύγοι δίκην
ὅστις δίοιδε τοὔντερον τῆς ἐμπίδος.

Μαθητής
Πρῴην δέ γε γνώμην μεγάλην ἀφῃρέθη
ὑπ᾽ἀσκαλαβώτου.

Στρεψιάδης
Τίνα τρόπον ; Κάτειπέ μοι.

Μαθητής
Ζητοῦντος αὐτοῦ τῆς σελήνης τὰς ὁδοὺς
καὶ τὰς περιφορὰς εἶτ᾽ἄνω κεχηνότος
ἀπὸ τῆς ὀροφῆς νύκτωρ γαλεώτης κατέχεσεν.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἡσθην γαλεώτῃ καταχέσαντι Σωκράτους.

Μαθητής
Ἔχθὲς δέ γ᾽ ἡμῖν δεῖπνον οὐκ ἦν ἐσπέρας.

Στρεψιάδης
Εἶέν. Τί οὖν πρὸς τἄλφιτ᾽ ἐπαλαμήσατο ;

Μαθητής
Κατὰ τῆς τραπέζης καταπάσας λεπτὴν τέφραν,
κάμψας ὀβελίσκον εἶτα διαβήτην λαβὼν
ἐκ τῆς παλαίστρας θοἰμάτιον ὑφείλετο.

Στρεψιάδης
Τί δῆτ᾽ ἐκεῖνον τὸν Θαλῆν θαυμάζομεν ;
Ἄνοιγ᾽ ἄνοιγ᾽ ἀνύσας τὸ φροντιστήριον
καὶ δεῖξον ὡς τάχιστά μοι τὸν Σωκράτη.
Μαθητιῶ γάρ. Ἀλλ᾽ ἄνοιγε τὴν θύραν.
Ὦ Ἡράκλεις, ταυτὶ ποδαπὰ τὰ θηρία ;

Μαθητής
Τί ἐθαύμασας ; Τῷ σοι δοκοῦσιν εἰκέναι ;

Στρεψιάδης
Τοῖς ἐκ Πύλου ληφθεῖσι, τοῖς Λακωνικοῖς.
Ἀτὰρ τί ποτ᾽ εἰς τὴν γῆν βλέπουσιν οὑτοι ;

Μαθητής
Ζητοῦσιν οὗτοι τὰ κατὰ γῆς.

Στρεψιάδης
Βολβοὺς ἄρα
ζητοῦσι. Μή νυν τοῦτό γ᾽ ἔτι φροντίζετε·
ἐγὼ γὰρ οἶδ᾽ ἵν᾽ εἰσὶ μεγάλοι καὶ καλοί.
Τί γὰρ οἵδε δρῶσιν οἱ σφόδρ᾽ ἐγκεκυφότες;

Μαθητής
Οὗτοι δ᾽ ἐρεβοδιφῶσιν ὑπὸ τὸν Τάρταρον.
Τί δῆθ᾽ ὁ πρωκτὸς εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν βλέπει;

Μαθητής
Αὐτὸς καθ᾽ αὑτὸν ἀστρονομεῖν διδάσκεται.
Ἀλλ᾽ εἴσιθ᾽, ἵνα μὴ ᾽κεῖνος ὑμῖν ἐπιτύχῃ.

Στρεψιάδης
Μήπω γε μήπω γ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπιμεινάντων, ἵνα
αὐτοῖσι κοινώσω τι πραγμάτιον ἐμόν.

Μαθητής
Ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ οἷόν τ᾽ αὐτοῖσι πρὸς τὸν ἀέρα
ἔξω διατρίβειν πολὺν ἄγαν ἐστὶν χρόνον.

Στρεψιάδης
Πρὸς τῶν θεῶν, τί γὰρ τάδ᾽ ἐστίν; Εἰπέ μοι.

Μαθητής
Ἀστρονομία μὲν αὐτηί.

Στρεψιάδης
Τουτὶ δὲ τί;

Μαθητής
Γεωμετρία.

Στρεψιάδης

Τοῦτ᾽ οὖν τί ἐστι χρήσιμον;

Μαθητής
Γῆν ἀναμετρῆσαι.

Στρεψιάδης
Πότερα τὴν κληρουχικήν ;

Μαθητής
Οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τὴν σύμπασαν.

Στρεψιάδης
ἀστεῖον λέγεις.
τὸ γὰρ σόφισμα δημοτικὸν καὶ χρήσιμον. 205

Μαθητής
Αὕτη δέ σοι γῆς περίοδος πάσης. Ὁρᾷς ;
Αἵδε μὲν Ἀθῆναι.

Στρεψιάδης
Τί σὺ λέγεις ; Οὐ πείθομαι,
ἐπεὶ δικαστὰς οὐχ ὁρῶ καθημένους.

Μαθητής
Ὡς τοῦτ᾽ἀληθῶς Ἀττικὸν τὸ χωρίον.

Στρεψιάδης
Καὶ ποῦ Κικυννῆς εἰσὶν οὑμοὶ δημόται; 210

Μαθητής
Ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἔνεισιν. Ἡ δέ γ᾽ Εὔβοι᾽, ὡς ὁρᾷς,
ἠδὶ παρατέταται μακρὰ πόρρω πάνυ.

Στρεψιάδης
Οἶδ᾽· ὑπὸ γὰρ ἡμῶν παρετάθη καὶ Περικλέους
Ἀλλ᾽ ἡ Λακεδαίμων ποῦ ᾽στίν ;

Μαθητής

Ὅπου ᾽στίν; Αὐτηί.

Στρεψιάδης
Ὡς ἐγγὺς ἡμῶν. Τοῦτο μεταφροντίζετε,
ταύτην ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν ἀπαγαγεῖν πόρρω πάνυ.

Μαθητής
ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ οἷόν τε.

Στρεψιάδης
Νὴ Δί᾽, οἰμώξεσθ᾽ ἄρα.
Φέρε τίς γὰρ οὗτος οὐπὶ τῆς κρεμάθρας ἀνήρ ;

Μαθητής
Αὐτός.

Στρεψιάδης
Τίς αὐτός;

Μαθητής
Σωκράτης.

Στρεψιάδης
Ὦ Σωκράτης.
ἴθ᾽ οὗτος, ἀναβόησον αὐτόν μοι μέγα.

Μαθητής
Αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν σὺ κάλεσον· οὐ γάρ μοι σχολή.

Στρεψιάδης
Ὦ Σώκρατες,
ὦ Σωκρατίδιον.

Σωκράτης
Τί με καλεῖς, ὦφήμερε;

Στρεψιάδης

Πρῶτον μὲν ὅ τι δρᾷς, ἀντιβολῶ, κάτειπέ μοι.

Σωκράτης
Ἀεροβατῶ καὶ περιφρονῶ τὸν ἥλιον.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἔπειτ᾽ ἀπὸ ταρροῦ τοὺς θεοὺς ὑπερφρονεῖς,
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, εἴπερ;

Σωκράτης
Οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε
ἐξηῦρον ὀρθῶς τὰ μετέωρα πράγματα,
εἰ μὴ κρεμάσας τὸ νόημα καὶ τὴν φροντίδα
λεπτὴν καταμείξας ἐς τὸν ὅμοιον ἀέρα.
Εἰ δ᾽ ὢν χαμαὶ τἄνω κάτωθεν ἐσκόπουν,
οὐκ ἄν ποθ᾽ ηὗρον· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ᾽ ἡ γῆ βίᾳ
ἕλκει πρὸς αὑτὴν τὴν ἰκμάδα τῆς φροντίδος.
Πάσχει δὲ ταὐτὸ τοῦτο καὶ τὰ κάρδαμα.

Στρεψιάδης
Τί φῄς;
Ἡ φροντὶς ἕλκει τὴν ἰκμάδ᾽ ἐς τὰ κάρδαμα;
Ἴθι νυν κατάβηθ᾽ ὦ Σωκρατίδιον ὡς ἐμέ,
ἵνα με διδάξῃς ὧνπερ οὕνεκ᾽ ἐλήλυθα.

Σωκράτης
Ἦλθες δὲ κατὰ τί;

Στρεψιάδης
Βουλόμενος μαθεῖν λέγειν·
ὑπὸ γὰρ τόκων χρήστων τε δυσκολωτάτων
ἄγομαι φέρομαι, τὰ χρήματ᾽ ἐνεχυράζομαι.

Σωκράτης
Πόθεν δ᾽ ὑπόχρεως σαυτὸν ἔλαθες γενόμενος ;

Στρεψιάδης
Νόσος μ᾽ ἐπέτριψεν ἱππικὴ δεινὴ φαγεῖν.

Ἀλλά με δίδαξον τὸν ἕτερον τοῖν σοῖν λόγοιν,
τὸν μηδὲν ἀποδιδόντα. Μισθὸν δ ‘ὅντιν’ ἂν 245
πράττῃ μ’ ὁμοῦμαί σοι καταθήσειν τοὺς θεούς.

Σωκράτης
Ποίους θεοὺς ὀμεῖ σύ ; Πρῶτον γὰρ θεοὶ
ἡμῖν νόμισμ’ οὐκ ἔστι.

Στρεψιάδης
Τῷ γὰρ ὄμνυτε ;
Σιδαρέοισιν ὥσπερ ἐν Βυζαντίῳ;

Σωκράτης
Βούλει τὰ θεῖα πράγματ’ εἰδέναι σαφῶς 250
ἅττ’ ἐστὶν ὀρθῶς;

Στρεψιάδης
Νὴ Δί’, εἴπερ ἐστί γε.

Σωκράτης
Καὶ ξυγγενέσθαι ταῖς Νεφέλαισιν ἐς λόγους,
ταῖς ἡμετέραισι δαίμοσιν ;

Στρεψιάδης
Μάλιστά γε.

Σωκράτης
Κάθιζε τοίνυν ἐπὶ τὸν ἱερὸν σκίμποδα.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἰδού, κάθημαι. 255

Σωκράτης
Τουτονὶ τοίνυν λαβὲ
τὸν στέφανον.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἐπὶ τί στέφανον ; Οἴμοι, Σώκρατες,

ὥσπερ με τὸν Ἀθάμανθ᾽ ὅπως μὴ θύσετε.

Σωκράτης
Οὔκ , ἀλλὰ ταῦτα πάντα τοὺς τελουμένους
ἡμεῖς ποιοῦμεν.

Στρεψιάδης
Εἶτα δὴ τί κερδανῶ ;

Σωκράτης
Λέγειν γενήσει τρῖμμα κρόταλον παιπάλη.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἔχ᾽ ἀτρεμεί.

Στρεψιάδης
Μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ ψεύσει γέ με·
καταπαττόμενος γὰρ παιπάλη γενήσομαι.

Σωκράτης
Εὐφημεῖν χρὴ τὸν πρεσβύτην καὶ τῆς εὐχῆς ἐπακούειν.
Ὦ δέσποτ᾽ ἄναξ, ἀμέτρητ᾽ Ἀήρ, ὃς ἔχεις τὴν γῆν μετέωρον,
λαμπρός τ᾽ Αἰθὴρ σεμναί τε θεαὶ Νεφέλαι βροντησικέραυνοι,
ἄρθητε, φάνητ᾽, ὦ δέσποιναι, τῷ φροντιστῇ μετέωροι.

Στρεψιάδης
Μήπω, μήπω γε, πρὶν ἂν τουτὶ πτύξωμαι, μὴ καταβρεχθῶ.
Τὸ δὲ μηδὲ κυνῆν οἴκοθεν ἐλθεῖν ἐμὲ τὸν κακοδαίμον᾽ ἔχοντα.

Σωκράτης
Ἔλθετε δῆτ᾽, ὦ πολυτίμητοι Νεφέλαι, τῷδ᾽ εἰς ἐπίδειξιν·
εἴτ᾽ ἐπ᾽ Ὀλύμπου κορυφαῖς ἱεραῖς χιονοβλήτοισι κάθησθε,
εἴτ᾽ Ὠκεανοῦ πατρὸς ἐν κήποις ἱερὸν χορὸν ἵστατε Νύμφαις,
εἴτ᾽ ἄρα Νείλου προχοαῖς ὑδάτων χρυσέαις ἀρύτεσθε πρόχοισιν,
ἢ Μαιῶτιν λίμνην ἔχετ᾽ ἢ σκόπελον νιφόεντα Μίμαντος:
ὑπακούσατε δεξάμεναι θυσίαν καὶ τοῖς ἱεροῖσι χαρεῖσαι.

Χορός

Ἄέναοι Νεφέλαι 275
ἀρθῶμεν φανεραὶ δροσερὰν φύσιν εὐάγητον,
πατρὸς ἀπ᾽ Ὠκεανοῦ βαρυαχέος
ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων κορυφὰς ἐπὶ
δενδροκόμους, ἵνα 280
τηλεφανεῖς σκοπιὰς ἀφορώμεθα,
καρπούς τ᾽ ἀρδομέναν ἱερὰν χθόνα,
καὶ ποταμῶν ζαθέων κελαδήματα,
καὶ πόντον κελάδοντα βαρύβρομον·
ὄμμα γὰρ αἰθέρος ἀκάματον σελαγεῖται 285
μαρμαρέαις ἐν αὐγαῖς.
Ἀλλ᾽ ἀποσεισάμεναι νέφος ὄμβριον
ἀθανάτας ἰδέας ἐπιδώμεθα
τηλεσκόπῳ ὄμματι γαῖαν. 290

Σωκράτης

Ὦ μέγα σεμναὶ Νεφέλαι, φανερῶς ἠκούσατέ μου καλέσαντος.
Ἠισθου φωνῆς ἅμα καὶ βροντῆς μυκησαμένης θεοσέπτου ;

Στρεψιάδης

Καὶ σέβομαί γ᾽, ὦ πολυτίμητοι, καὶ βούλομαι ἀνταποπαρδεῖν
πρὸς τὰς βροντάς· οὕτως αὐτὰς τετραμαίνω καὶ πεφόβημαι.
Κεἰ θέμις ἐστίν, νυνί γ᾽ἤδη, κεἰ μὴ θέμις ἐστί, χεσείω. 295

Σωκράτης

Οὐ μὴ σκώψει μηδὲ ποιήσεις ἅπερ οἱ τρυγοδαίμονες οὗτοι,
ἀλλ᾽ εὐφήμει· μέγα γάρ τι θεῶν κινεῖται σμῆνος ἀοιδαῖς.

Χορός

Παρθένοι ὀμβροφόροι
ἔλθωμεν λιπαρὰν χθόνα Παλλάδος, εὔανδρον γᾶν 300
Κέκροπος ὀψόμεναι πολυήρατον:
οὗ σέβας ἀρρήτων ἱερῶν, ἵνα
μυστοδόκος δόμος
ἐν τελεταῖς ἁγίαις ἀναδείκνυται,
οὐρανίοις τε θεοῖς δωρήματα, 305

ναοί θ᾽ ὑψερεφεῖς καὶ ἀγάλματα,
καὶ πρόσοδοι μακάρων ἱερώταται,
εὐστέφανοί τε θεῶν θυσίαι θαλίαι τε,
παντοδαπαῖς ἐν ὥραις,
ἦρί τ᾽ ἐπερχομένῳ Βρομία χάρις,
εὐκελάδων τε χορῶν ἐρεθίσματα
καὶ μοῦσα βαρύβρομος αὐλῶν.

Στρεψιάδης
Πρὸς τοῦ Διός, ἀντιβολῶ σε, φράσον, τίνες εἴσ᾽, ὦ Σώκρατες, αὗται
αἱ φθεγξάμεναι τοῦτο τὸ σεμνόν ; Πρὸς τοῦ Διός, ἀντιβολῶ σε, φράσον, τίνες εἴσ᾽, ὦ Σώκρατες, αὗται ἡρῷναί τινές εἰσιν ;

Σωκράτης
Ἥκιστ᾽ ἀλλ᾽οὐράνιαι Νεφέλαι μεγάλαι θεαὶ ἀνδράσιν ἀργοῖς,
αἵπερ γνώμην καὶ διάλεξιν καὶ νοῦν ἡμῖν παρέχουσιν
καὶ τερατείαν καὶ περίλεξιν καὶ κροῦσιν καὶ κατάληψιν.

Στρεψιάδης
Ταῦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἀκούσασ᾽ αὐτῶν τὸ φθέγμ᾽ ἡ ψυχή μου πεπότηται
καὶ λεπτολογεῖν ἤδη ζητεῖ καὶ περὶ καπνοῦ στενολεσχεῖν,
καὶ γνωμιδίῳ γνώμην νύξασ᾽ ἑτέρῳ λόγῳ ἀντιλογῆσαι·
ὥστ᾽ εἴ πως ἔστιν ἰδεῖν αὐτὰς ἤδη φανερῶς ἐπιθυμῶ.

Σωκράτης
Βλέπε νυν δευρὶ πρὸς τὴν Πάρνηθ᾽: ἤδη γὰρ ὁρῶ κατιούσας
ἡσυχῇ αὐτάς.

Στρεψιάδης
Φέρε ποῦ ; Δεῖξον.

Σωκράτης
Χωροῦσ᾽ αὗται πάνυ πολλαὶ
διὰ τῶν κοίλων καὶ τῶν δασέων, αὗται πλάγιαι.

Στρεψιάδης

Τί τὸ χρῆμα ;
Ὡς οὐ καθορῶ.

Σωκράτης
Παρὰ τὴν εἴσοδον.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἤδη νυνὶ μόλις οὔτως.

Σωκράτης
Νῦν γέ τοι ἤδη καθορᾷς αὐτάς, εἰ μὴ λημᾷς κολοκύνταις.

Στρεψιάδης
Νὴ Δί᾽ ἔγωγ᾽. Ὦ πολυτίμητοι· πάντα γὰρ ἤδη κατέχουσιν.

Σωκράτης
Ταύτας μέντοι σὺ θεὰς οὔσας οὐκ ᾔδησθ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἐνόμιζες ;

Στρεψιάδης
Μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ὁμίχλην καὶ δρόσον αὐτὰς ἡγούμην καὶ καπνὸν εἶναι.

Σωκράτης
Οὐ γὰρ μὰ Δί᾽ οἶσθ᾽ ὁτιὴ πλείστους αὗται βόσκουσι σοφιστάς,
Θουριομάντεις ἰατροτέχνας σφραγιδονυχαργοκομήτας,
κυκλίων τε χορῶν ἀσματοκάμπτας ἄνδρας μετεωροφένακας,
οὐδὲν δρῶντας βόσκουσ᾽ ἀργούς, ὅτι ταύτας μουσοποιοῦσιν.

Στρεψιάδης
Ταῦτ ‘ἄρ᾽ἐποίουν ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταιγλᾶν δάιον ὁρμάν,
πλοκάμους θ᾽ ἑκατογκεφάλα Τυφῶ πρημαινούσας τε θυέλλας,
εἶτ᾽ ἀερίας διεράς, γαμψοὺς οἰωνοὺς ἀερονηχεῖς,
ὄμβρους θ᾽ὑδάτων δροσερᾶν νεφελᾶν· εἶτ᾽ ἀντ᾽ αὐτῶν κατέπινον
κεστρᾶν τεμάχη μεγαλᾶν ἀγαθᾶν κρέα τ᾽ ὀρνίθεια κιχηλᾶν.

Σωκράτης
Διὰ μέντοι τάσδ᾽ οὐχὶ δικαίως ;

Στρεψιάδης
Λέξον δή μοι, τί παθοῦσαι,
εἴπερ νεφέλαι γ᾽ εἰσὶν ἀληθῶς, θνηταῖς εἴξασι γυναιξίν ;
Οὐ γὰρ ἐκεῖναί γ᾽ εἰσὶ τοιαῦται.

Σωκράτης
Φέρε ποῖαι γάρ τινές εἰσιν ;

Στρεψιάδης
Οὐκ οἶδα σαφῶς· εἴξασιν δ᾽ οὖν ἐρίοισιν πεπταμένοισιν,
κοὐχὶ γυναιξίν, μὰ Δί᾽, οὐδ᾽ ὁτιοῦν· αὗται δὲ ῥῖνας
ἔχουσιν.

Σωκράτης
Ἀπόκριναί νυν ἅττ᾽ ἂν ἔρωμαι. 345

Στρεψιάδης
Λέγε νυν ταχέως ὅ τι βούλει.

Σωκράτης
Ἦδη ποτ᾽ ἀναβλέψας εἶδες νεφέλην κενταύρῳ ὁμοίαν,
ἢ παρδάλει ἢ λύκῳ ἢ ταύρῳ;

Στρεψιάδης
Νὴ Δί᾽ ἔγωγ᾽. Εἶτα τί τοῦτο ;

Σωκράτης
Γίγνονται πάνθ᾽ ὅτι βούλονται· κᾆτ᾽ ἢν μὲν ἴδωσι κομήτην
ἄγριόν τινα τῶν λασίων τούτων, οἷόνπερ τὸν Ξενοφάντου,
σκώπτουσαι τὴν μανίαν αὐτοῦ κενταύροις ᾔκασαν αὐτάς.

Στρεψιάδης
Τί γὰρ ἢν ἅρπαγα τῶν δημοσίων κατίδωσι Σίμωνα, τί δρῶσιν; 351

Σωκράτης
Ἀποφαίνουσαι τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ λύκοι ἐξαίφνης ἐγένοντο.

Στρεψιάδης

Ταῦτ᾽ ἄρα ταῦτα Κλεώνυμον αὗται τὸν ῥίψασπιν χθὲς ἰδοῦσαι,
ὅτι δειλότατον τοῦτον ἑώρων, ἔλαφοι διὰ τοῦτ᾽ ἐγένοντο.

Σωκράτης
Καὶ νῦν γ᾽ ὅτι Κλεισθένη εἶδον, ὁρᾷς, διὰ τοῦτ᾽ ἐγένοντο γυναῖκες. 355

Στρεψιάδης
Χαίρετε τοίνυν ὦ δέσποιναι· καὶ νῦν, εἴπερ τινὶ κἄλλῳ,
οὐρανομήκη ῥήξατε κἀμοὶ φωνήν, ὦ παμβασίλειαι.

Χορός
Χαῖρ᾽ ὦ πρεσβῦτα παλαιογενὲς θηρατὰ λόγων φιλομούσων,
Σύ τε λεπτοτάτων λήρων ἱερεῦ, φράζε πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὅ τι χρῄζεις ·
οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἄλλῳ γ᾽ὑπακούσαιμεν τῶν νῦν μετεωροσοφιστῶν 360
πλὴν ἢ Προδίκῳ, τῷ μὲν σοφίας καὶ γνώμης οὕνεκα, σοὶ δέ,
ὅτι βρενθύει τ᾽ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς καὶ τὠφθαλμὼ παραβάλλεις,
κἀνυπόδητος κακὰ πόλλ᾽ἀνέχει κἀφ᾽ἡμῖν σεμνοπροσωπεῖς.

Στρεψιάδης
Ὦ γῆ τοῦ φθέγματος, ὡς ἱερὸν καὶ σεμνὸν καὶ τερατῶδες.

Σωκράτης
Αὗται γάρ τοι μόναι εἰσὶ θεαί, τἄλλα δὲ πάντ᾽ἐστὶ φλύαρος. 365

Στρεψιάδης
Ὁ Ζεὺς δ᾽ἡμῖν, φέρε πρὸς τῆς γῆς, οὐλύμπιος οὐ θεός ἐστιν ;

Σωκράτης
Ποῖος Ζεύς; Οὐ μὴ ληρήσεις. Οὐδ᾽ ἐστὶ Ζεύς.

Στρεψιάδης
Τί λέγεις σύ ;
Ἀλλὰ τίς ὕει ; Τουτὶ γὰρ ἔμοιγ᾽ ἀπόφηναι πρῶτον ἁπάντων.

Σωκράτης
Αὗται δήπου· μεγάλοις δέ σ᾽ ἐγὼ σημείοις αὐτὸ διδάξω.

Φέρε ποῦ γὰρ πώποτ᾽ ἄνευ Νεφελῶν ὕοντ᾽ ἤδη τεθέασαι ;
Καίτοι χρῆν αἰθρίας ὕειν αὐτόν, ταύτας δ᾽ ἀποδημεῖν. 371

Στρεψιάδης
Νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω τοῦτό γέ τοι δὴ τῷ νῦν λόγῳ εὖ προσέφυσας:
Καίτοι πρότερον τὸν Δῖ᾽ ἀληθῶς ὤμην διὰ κοσκίνου οὐρεῖν.
Ἀλλ᾽ ὅστις ὁ βροντῶν ἐστι φράσον, τοῦθ᾽ ὅ με ποιεῖ τετρεμαίνειν.

Σωκράτης
Αὗται βροντῶσι κυλινδόμεναι. 375

Στρεψιάδης
Τῷ τρόπῳ ὦ πάντα σὺ τολμῶν ;

Σωκράτης
Ὅταν ἐμπλησθῶσ᾽ὕδατος πολλοῦ κἀναγκασθῶσι φέρεσθαι,
κατακρημνάμεναι πλήρεις ὄμβρου δι᾽ ἀνάγκην, εἶτα βαρεῖαι
εἰς ἀλλήλας ἐμπίπτουσαι ῥήγνυνται καὶ παταγοῦσιν.

Στρεψιάδης
Ὁ δ᾽ἀναγκάζων ἐστὶ τίς αὐτάς, οὐχ ὁ Ζεύς, ὥστε φέρεσθαι ;

Σωκράτης
Ἥκιστ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ αἰθέριος Δῖνος. 380

Στρεψιάδης
Δῖνος; Τουτί μ᾽ ἐλελήθειν,
ὁ Ζεὺς οὐκ ὤν, ἀλλ᾽ἀντ᾽αὐτοῦ Δῖνος νυνὶ βασιλεύων.
Ἀτὰρ οὐδέν πω περὶ τοῦ πατάγου καὶ τῆς βροντῆς μ᾽ ἐδίδαξας.

Σωκράτης
Οὐκ ἤκουσάς μου τὰς Νεφέλας ὕδατος μεστὰς ὅτι φημὶ
ἐμπιπτούσας εἰς ἀλλήλας παταγεῖν διὰ τὴν πυκνότητα ;

Στρεψιάδης
Φέρε τουτὶ τῷ χρὴ πιστεύειν ; 385

Σωκράτης
Ἀπὸ σαυτοῦ ‘γώ σε διδάξω.
Ἠδη ζωμοῦ Παναθηναίοις ἐμπλησθεὶς εἶτ’ ἐταράχθης
τὴν γαστέρα, καὶ κλόνος ἐξαίφνης αὐτὴν διεκορκορύγησεν ;

Στρεψιάδης
Νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω καὶ δεινὰ ποιεῖ γ’ εὐθύς μοι, καὶ τετάρακται
χὥσπερ βροντὴ τὸ ζωμίδιον παταγεῖ καὶ δεινὰ κέκραγεν:
ἀτρέμας πρῶτον παππὰξ παππάξ, κἄπειτ’ ἐπάγει παπαπαππάξ, 390
χὤταν χέζω, κομιδῇ βροντᾷ παπαπαππὰξ ὥσπερ ἐκεῖναι.

Σωκράτης
Σκέψαι τοίνυν ἀπὸ γαστριδίου τυννουτουὶ οἷα πέπορδας ·
τὸν δ’ Ἀέρα τόνδ’ ὄντ’ἀπέραντον πῶς οὐκ εἰκὸς μέγα βροντᾶν ;

Στρεψιάδης
Ταῦτ’ ἄρα καὶ τὠνόματ’ἀλλήλοιν βροντὴ καὶ πορδὴ ὁμοίω.
Ἀλλ’ ὁ κεραυνὸς πόθεν αὖ φέρεται λάμπων πυρί, τοῦτο δίδαξον, 395
καὶ καταφρύγει βάλλων ἡμᾶς, τοὺς δὲ ζῶντας περιφλύει;
Τοῦτον γὰρ δὴ φανερῶς ὁ Ζεὺς ἴησ’ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐπιόρκους.

Σωκράτης
Καὶ πῶς ὦ μῶρε σὺ καὶ Κρονίων ὄζων καὶ βεκκεσέληνε,
εἴπερ βάλλει τοὺς ἐπιόρκους, δῆτ’ οὐχὶ Σίμων’ ἐνέπρησεν
οὐδὲ Κλεώνυμον οὐδὲ Θέωρον ; Καίτοι σφόδρα γ’ εἶσ’ ἐπίορκοι: 400
Ἀλλὰ τὸν αὐτοῦ γε νεὼν βάλλει καὶ Σούνιον ἄκρον Ἀθηνέων
καὶ τὰς δρῦς τὰς μεγάλας, τί μαθών ; Οὐ γὰρ δὴ δρῦς γ’ ἐπίορκεῖ.

Στρεψιάδης
Οὐκ οἶδ’· ἀτὰρ εὖ σὺ λέγειν φαίνει. Τί γάρ ἐστιν δῆθ’ ὁ κεραυνός ;

Σωκράτης
ὅταν ἐς ταύτας ἄνεμος ξηρὸς μετεωρισθεὶς κατακληισθῇ,
ἔνδοθεν αὐτὰς ὥσπερ κύστιν φυσᾷ, κἄπειθ’ὑπ’ἀνάγκης

ῥήξας αὐτὰς ἔξω φέρεται σοβαρὸς διὰ τὴν πυκνότητα,
ὑπὸ τοῦ ῥοίβδου καὶ τῆς ῥύμης αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν κατακάων.

Στρεψιάδης
νὴ Δῖ ἐγὼ γοῦν ἀτεχνῶς ἔπαθον τουτί ποτε Διασίοισιν
ὀπτῶν γαστέρα τοῖς συγγενέσιν, κᾆτ᾽οὐκ ἔσχων ἀμελήσας:
ἡ δ᾽ἄρ᾽ἐφυσᾶτ᾽, εἶτ᾽ἐξαίφνης διαλακήσασα πρὸς αὐτὼ
τὠφθαλμώ μου προσετίλησεν καὶ κατέκαυσεν τὸ πρόσωπον.

Χορός
ὦ τῆς μεγάλης ἐπιθυμήσας σοφίας ἄνθρωπε παρ᾽ἡμῶν,
ὡς εὐδαίμων ἐν Ἀθηναίοις καὶ τοῖς Ἕλλησι γενήσει,
εἰ μνήμων εἶ καὶ φροντιστὴς καὶ τὸ ταλαίπωρον ἔνεστιν
ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, καὶ μὴ κάμνεις μήθ᾽ἑστὼς μήτε βαδίζων,
μήτε ῥιγῶν ἄχθει λίαν μήτ᾽ἀριστᾶν ἐπιθυμεῖς,
οἴνου τ᾽ἀπέχει καὶ γυμνασίων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀνοήτων,
καὶ βέλτιστον τοῦτο νομίζεις, ὅπερ εἰκὸς δεξιὸν ἄνδρα,
νικᾶν πράττων καὶ βουλεύων καὶ τῇ γλώττῃ πολεμίζων.

Στρεψιάδης
ἀλλ᾽οὔνεκά γε ψυχῆς στερρᾶς δυσκολοκοίτου τε μερίμνης
καὶ φειδωλοῦ καὶ τρυσιβίου γαστρὸς καὶ θυμβρεπιδείπνου,
ἀμέλει θαρρῶν οὕνεκα τούτων ἐπιχαλκεύειν παρέχοιμ᾽ἄν.

Σωκράτης
ἄλλο τι δῆτ᾽οὖν νομιεῖς ἤδη θεὸν οὐδένα πλὴν ἅπερ ἡμεῖς,
τὸ Χάος τουτὶ καὶ τὰς Νεφέλας καὶ τὴν γλῶτταν, τρία ταυτί;

Στρεψιάδης
οὐδ᾽ἂν διαλεχθείην γ᾽ἀτεχνῶς τοῖς ἄλλοις οὐδ᾽ἂν ἀπαντῶν:
οὐδ᾽ἂν θύσαιμ᾽, οὐδ᾽ἂν σπείσαιμ᾽, οὐδ᾽ἐπιθείην λιβανωτόν.

Χορός
λέγε νυν ἡμῖν ὅ τι σοι δρῶμεν θαρρῶν, ὡς οὐκ ἀτυχήσεις
ἡμᾶς τιμῶν καὶ θαυμάζων καὶ ζητῶν δεξιὸς εἶναι.

Στρεψιάδης
ὦ δέσποιναι δέομαι τοίνυν ὑμῶν τουτὶ πάνυ μικρόν,
τῶν Ἑλλήνων εἶναί με λέγειν ἑκατὸν σταδίοισιν ἄριστον.

Χορός
ἀλλ᾽ἔσται σοι τοῦτο παρ᾽ἡμῶν: ὥστε τὸ λοιπόν γ᾽ἀπὸ τουδὶ
ἐν τῷ δήμῳ γνώμας οὐδεὶς νικήσει πλείονας ἢ σύ.

Στρεψιάδης
μὴ ‘μοί γε λέγειν γνώμας μεγάλας: οὐ γὰρ τούτων ἐπιθυμῶ,
ἀλλ᾽ὅσ᾽ἐμαυτῷ στρεψοδικῆσαι καὶ τοὺς χρήστας διολισθεῖν.

Χορός
τεύξει τοίνυν ὧν ἰμείρεις: οὐ γὰρ μεγάλων ἐπιθυμεῖς.
ἀλλὰ σεαυτὸν θαρρῶν παράδος τοῖς ἡμετέροις προπόλοισιν.

Στρεψιάδης
δράσω ταῦθ᾽ὑμῖν πιστεύσας: ἡ γὰρ ἀνάγκη με πιέζει
διὰ τοὺς ἵππους τοὺς κοππατίας καὶ τὸν γάμον ὅς μ᾽ἐπέτριψεν.
νῦν οὖν ἀτεχνῶς ὅ τι βούλονται
τουτὶ τοὐμὸν σῶμ᾽αὐτοῖσιν
παρέχω, τύπτειν πεινῆν διψῆν
αὐχμεῖν ῥιγῶν ἀσκὸν δείρειν,
εἴπερ τὰ χρέα διαφευξοῦμαι,
τοῖς τ᾽ἀνθρώποις εἶναι δόξω
θρασὺς εὔγλωττος τολμηρὸς ἴτης
βδελυρὸς ψευδῶν συγκολλητὴς
εὑρησιεπὴς περίτριμμα δικῶν
κύρβις κρόταλον κίναδος τρύμη
μάσθλης εἴρων γλοιὸς ἀλαζὼν
κέντρων μιαρὸς στρόφις ἀργαλέος
ματιολοιχός:
ταῦτ᾽εἴ με καλοῦσ᾽ἁπαντῶντες,
δρώντων ἀτεχνῶς ὅ τι χρῄζουσιν,
κεἰ βούλονται
νὴ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽ἔκ μου χορδὴν
τοῖς φροντισταῖς παραθέντων.

Χορός
λῆμα μὲν πάρεστι τῷδέ γ᾽
οὐκ ἄτολμον ἀλλ᾽ἕτοιμον. ἴσθι δ᾽ὡς

ταῦτα μαθὼν παρ᾽ἐμοῦ κλέος οὐρανόμηκες
ἐν βροτοῖσιν ἕξεις.

Στρεψιάδης
τί πείσομαι;

Χορός
τὸν πάντα χρόνον μετ᾽ἐμοῦ
ζηλωτότατον βίον ἀνθρώπων διάξεις.

Στρεψιάδης
ἆρά γε τοῦτ᾽ἄρ᾽ἐγώ ποτ᾽
ὄψομαι;

Χορός
ὥστε γέ σου πολλοὺς ἐπὶ ταῖσι θύραις ἀεὶ καθῆσθαι,
βουλομένους ἀνακοινοῦσθαί τε καὶ ἐς λόγον ἐλθεῖν
πράγματα κἀντιγραφὰς πολλῶν ταλάντων,
ἄξια σῇ φρενὶ συμβουλευσομένους μετὰ σοῦ.
ἀλλ᾽ἐγχείρει τὸν πρεσβύτην ὅ τι περ μέλλεις προδιδάσκειν,
καὶ διακίνει τὸν νοῦν αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς γνώμης ἀποπειρῶ.

Σωκράτης
ἄγε δὴ κάτειπέ μοι σὺ τὸν σαυτοῦ τρόπον,
ἵν᾽αὐτὸν εἰδὼς ὅστις ἐστὶ μηχανὰς
ἤδη ‘πὶ τούτοις πρὸς σὲ καινὰς προσφέρω.

Στρεψιάδης
τί δέ; τειχομαχεῖν μοι διανοεῖ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν;

Σωκράτης
οὔκ, ἀλλὰ βραχέα σου πυθέσθαι βούλομαι.
ἦ μνημονικὸς εἶ;

Στρεψιάδης
δύο τρόπω νὴ τὸν Δία:
ἢν μὲν γὰρ ὀφείληταί τί μοι, μνήμων πάνυ:

ἐὰν δ’ὀφείλω, σχέτλιος, ἐπιλήσμων πάνυ.

Σωκράτης
ἔνεστι δῆτα μανθάνειν ἐν τῇ φύσει;

Στρεψιάδης
λέγειν μὲν οὐκ ἔνεστ’, ἀποστερεῖν δ’ἔνι.

Σωκράτης
πῶς οὖν δυνήσει μανθάνειν;

Στρεψιάδης
ἀμέλει καλῶς.

Σωκράτης
ἄγε νυν ὅπως, ὅταν τι προβάλλω σοι σοφὸν
περὶ τῶν μετεώρων, εὐθέως ὑφαρπάσει.

Στρεψιάδης
τί δαί; κυνηδὸν τὴν σοφίαν σιτήσομαι;

Σωκράτης
ἄνθρωπος ἀμαθὴς οὑτοσὶ καὶ βάρβαρος.
δέδοικά σ’ὦ πρεσβῦτα μὴ πληγῶν δέει.
φέρ’ἴδω τί δρᾷς, ἤν τίς σε τύπτῃ;

Στρεψιάδης
τύπτομαι,
ἔπειτ’ἐπισχὼν ὀλίγον ἐπιμαρτύρομαι,
εἶτ’αὖθις ἀκαρῆ διαλιπὼν δικάζομαι.

Σωκράτης
ἴθι νυν κατάθου θοἰμάτιον.

Στρεψιάδης
ἠδίκηκά τι,

Σωκράτης
οὔκ, ἀλλὰ γυμνοὺς εἰσιέναι νομίζεται.

Στρεψιάδης
ἀλλ᾽οὐχὶ φωράσων ἔγωγ᾽εἰσέρχομαι.

Σωκράτης
κατάθου. τί λῃρεῖς;

Στρεψιάδης
Εἰπὲ δή νυν μοι τοδί·
ἢν ἐπιμελὴς ὦ καὶ προθύμως μανθάνω,
τῷ τῶν μαθητῶν ἐμφερὴς γενήσομαι ;

Σωκράτης
Οὐδὲν διοίσεις Χαιρεφῶντος τὴν φύσιν.

Στρεψιάδης
Οἴμοι κακοδαίμων ἡμιθνὴς γενήσομαι.

Σωκράτης
Οὐ μὴ λαλήσεις, ἀλλ᾽ ἀκολουθήσεις ἐμοὶ
ἀνύσας τι δευρὶ θᾶττον ;

Στρεψιάδης
Εἰς τὼ χεῖρέ νυν
δός μοι μελιτοῦτταν πρότερον, ὡς δέδοικ᾽ ἐγὼ
εἴσω καταβαίνων ὥσπερ ἐς Τροφωνίου.

Σωκράτης
Χώρει. Τί κυπτάζεις ἔχων περὶ τὴν θύραν ;

Χορός
Ἀλλ᾽ ἴθι χαίρων
τῆς ἀνδρείας
εἵνεκα ταύτης.
Εὐτυχία γένοιτο τἀνθρώπῳ,
ὅτι προήκων
εἰς βαθὺ τῆς ἡλικίας

νεωτέροις τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ 515
πράγμασιν χρωτίζεται
καὶ σοφίαν ἐπασκεῖ.
Ὦ θεώμενοι κατερῶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλευθέρως
τἀληθῆ νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον τὸν ἐκθρέψαντά με.
Οὕτω νικήσαιμί τ᾽ ἐγὼ καὶ νομιζοίμην σοφός, 520
ὡς ὑμᾶς ἡγούμενος εἶναι θεατὰς δεξιοὺς
καὶ ταύτην σοφώτατ᾽ ἔχειν τῶν ἐμῶν κωμῳδιῶν,
πρώτους ἠξίωσ᾽ ἀναγεῦσ᾽ὑμᾶς, ἣ παρέσχε μοι
ἔργον πλεῖστον· εἶτ᾽ἀνεχώρουν ὑπ᾽ἀνδρῶν φορτικῶν
ἡττηθεὶς οὐκ ἄξιος ὢν. ταῦτ᾽ οὖν ὑμῖν μέμφομαι 525
τοῖς σοφοῖς, ὧν οὕνεκ᾽ ἐγὼ ταῦτ᾽ ἐπραγματευόμην.
Ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὡς ὑμῶν ποθ᾽ἑκὼν προδώσω τοὺς δεξιούς.
Ἐξ ὅτου γὰρ ἐνθάδ᾽ ὑπ᾽ἀνδρῶν, οἷς ἡδὺ καὶ λέγειν,
ὁ σώφρων τε χὠ καταπύγων ἄριστ᾽ ἠκουσάτην,
κἀγώ, παρθένος γὰρ ἔτ᾽ ἦν, κοὐκ ἐξῆν πώ μοι τεκεῖν, 530
ἐξέθηκα, παῖς δ᾽ ἑτέρα τις λαβοῦσ᾽ ἀνείλετο,
ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ἐξεθρέψατε γενναίως κἀπαιδεύσατε,
ἐκ τούτου μοι πιστὰ παρ᾽ ὑμῖν γνώμης ἔσθ᾽ ὅρκια.
Νῦν οὖν Ἠλέκτραν κατ᾽ ἐκείνην ἦδ᾽ ἡ κωμῳδία
ζητοῦσ᾽ ἦλθ᾽, ἤν που ᾽πιτύχῃ θεαταῖς οὕτω σοφοῖς. 535
Γνώσεται γάρ, ἥνπερ ἴδῃ, τἀδελφοῦ τὸν βόστρυχον.
ὡς δὲ σώφρων ἐστὶ φύσει σκέψασθ᾽: ἥτις πρῶτα μὲν
οὐδὲν ἦλθε ῥαψαμένη σκυτίον καθειμένον
ἐρυθρὸν ἐξ ἄκρου, παχύ, τοῖς παιδίοις ἵν᾽ ᾖ γέλως·
οὐδ᾽ ἔσκωψε τοὺς φαλακρούς, οὐδὲ κόρδαχ᾽εἵλκυσεν, 540
οὐδὲ πρεσβύτης ὁ λέγων τἄπη τῇ βακτηρίᾳ
τύπτει τὸν παρόντ᾽ ἀφανίζων πονηρὰ σκώμματα,
οὐδ᾽ εἰσῇξε δᾷδας ἔχουσ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ἰοὺ ἰοὺ βοᾷ,
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτῇ καὶ τοῖς ἔπεσιν πιστεύουσ᾽ἐλήλυθεν.
Κἀγὼ μὲν τοιοῦτος ἀνὴρ ὢν ποιητὴς οὐ κομῶ, 545
οὐδ᾽ ὑμᾶς ζητῶ ‘ ξαπατᾶν δὶς καὶ τρὶς ταὔτ᾽ εἰσάγων,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀεὶ καινὰς ἰδέας ἐσφέρων σοφίζομαι,
οὐδὲν ἀλλήλαισιν ὁμοίας καὶ πάσας δεξιάς:
Ὃς μέγιστον ὄντα Κλέων᾽ ἔπαισ᾽ εἰς τὴν γαστέρα,
κοὐκ ἐτόλμησ᾽ αὖθις ἐπεμπηδῆσ᾽ αὐτῷ κειμένῳ. 550
Οὗτοι δ᾽, ὡς ἅπαξ παρέδωκεν λαβὴν Ὑπέρβολος,

τοῦτον δείλαιον κολετρῶσ᾽ ἀεὶ καὶ τὴν μητέρα.
Εὔπολις μὲν τὸν Μαρικᾶν πρώτιστον παρείλκυσεν
ἐκστρέψας τοὺς ἡμετέρους Ἱππέας κακὸς κακῶς,
προσθεὶς αὐτῷ γραῦν μεθύσην τοῦ κόρδακος οὕνεχ᾽, ἣν
Φρύνιχος πάλαι πεποίηχ᾽, ἣν τὸ κῆτος ἤσθιεν.
Εἶθ᾽ Ἕρμιππος αὖθις ἐποίησεν εἰς Ὑπέρβολον,
ἄλλοι τ᾽ ἤδη πάντες ἐρείδουσιν εἰς Ὑπέρβολον,
τὰς εἰκοὺς τῶν ἐγχέλεων τὰς ἐμὰς μιμούμενοι.
Ὅστις οὖν τούτοισι γελᾷ, τοῖς ἐμοῖς μὴ χαιρέτω.
Ἢν δ᾽ἐμοὶ καὶ τοῖσιν ἐμοῖς εὐφραίνησθ᾽ εὑρήμασιν,
εἰς τὰς ὥρας τὰς ἑτέρας εὖ φρονεῖν δοκήσετε.
Ὑψιμέδοντα μὲν θεῶν
Ζῆνα τύραννον ἐς χορὸν
πρῶτα μέγαν κικλήσκω·
τόν τε μεγασθενῆ τριαίνης ταμίαν,
γῆς τε καὶ ἁλμυρᾶς θαλάσσης ἄγριον μοχλευτήν·
καὶ μεγαλώνυμον ἡμέτερον πατέρ᾽
Αἰθέρα σεμνότατον βιοθρέμμονα πάντων·
τόν θ᾽ ἱπποσώμαν, ὃς ὑπερλάμπροις
ἀκτῖσιν κατέχει
γῆς πέδον μέγας ἐν θεοῖς
ἐν θνητοῖσί τε δαίμων.
Ὦ σοφώτατοι θεαταὶ δεῦρο τὸν νοῦν προσέχετε·
ἠδικημέναι γὰρ ὑμῖν μεμφόμεσθ᾽ ἐναντίον.
Πλεῖστα γὰρ θεῶν ἁπάντων ὠφελούσαις τὴν πόλιν,
δαιμόνων ἡμῖν μόναις οὐ θύετ᾽ οὐδὲ σπένδετε,
αἵτινες τηροῦμεν ὑμᾶς. Ἦν γὰρ ᾖ τις ἔξοδος
μηδενὶ ξὺν νῷ, τότ᾽ ἢ βροντῶμεν ἢ ψακάζομεν.
Εἶτα τὸν θεοῖσιν ἐχθρὸν βυρσοδέψην Παφλαγόνα
ἡνίχ᾽ ᾑρεῖσθε στρατηγόν, τὰς ὀφρῦς συνήγομεν
κἀποιοῦμεν δεινά, βροντὴ δ᾽ ἐρράγη δι᾽ ἀστραπῆς.
Ἡ σελήνη δ᾽ ἐξέλειπε τὰς ὁδούς, ὁ δ᾽ ἥλιος
τὴν θρυαλλίδ᾽ εἰς ἑαυτὸν εὐθέως ξυνελκύσας
οὐ φανεῖν ἔφασκεν ὑμῖν, εἰ στρατηγήσει Κλέων.
Ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως εἵλεσθε τοῦτον· φασὶ γὰρ δυσβουλίαν
τῇδε τῇ πόλει προσεῖναι, ταῦτα μέντοι τοὺς θεοὺς
ἄττ᾽ ἂν ὑμεῖς ἐξαμάρτητ᾽ ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον τρέπειν.

Ὡς δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ξυνοίσει ῥᾳδίως διδάξομεν.
Ἢν λέωνα τὸν λάρον δώρων ἑλόντες καὶ κλοπῆς
εἶτα φιμώσητε τούτου τῷ ξύλῳ τὸν αὐχένα,
αὖθις ἐς τἀρχαῖον ὑμῖν, εἴ τι κἀξημάρτετε,
ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον τὸ πρᾶγμα τῇ πόλει συνοίσεται.
Ἀμφί μοι αὖτε Φοῖβ᾽ ἄναξ
Δήλιε Κυνθίαν ἔχων
ὑψικέρατα πέτραν,
ἥ τ᾽ Ἐφέσου μάκαιρα πάγχρυσον ἔχεις
οἶκον ἐν ᾧ κόραι σε Λυδῶν μεγάλως σέβουσιν,
ἥ τ᾽ ἐπιχώριος ἡμετέρα θεὸς
αἰγίδος ἡνίοχος πολιοῦχος Ἀθάνα,
Παρνασσίαν θ᾽ ὃς κατέχων
πέτραν σὺν πεύκαις σελαγεῖ
Βάκχαις Δελφίσιν ἐμπρέπων,
κωμαστὴς Διόνυσος.
Ἡνίχ᾽ ἡμεῖς δεῦρ᾽ ἀφορμᾶσθαι παρεσκευάσμεθα,
ἡ σελήνη συντυχοῦσ᾽ ἡμῖν ἐπέστειλεν φράσαι,
πρῶτα μὲν χαίρειν Ἀθηναίοισι καὶ τοῖς ξυμμάχοις·
εἶτα θυμαίνειν ἔφασκε. Δεινὰ δεινὰ γὰρ πεπονθέναι
ὠφελοῦσ᾽ ὑμᾶς ἅπαντας οὐ λόγοις ἀλλ᾽ ἐμφανῶς.
πρῶτα μὲν τοῦ μηνὸς ἐς δᾷδ᾽οὐκ ἔλαττον ἢ δραχμήν,
ὥστε καὶ λέγειν ἅπαντας ἐξιόντας ἑσπέρας,
‘μὴ πρίῃ παῖ δᾷδ᾽, ἐπειδὴ φῶς σεληναίας καλόν.’
Ἄλλα τ᾽ εὖ δρᾶν φησιν, ὑμᾶς δ᾽οὐκ ἄγειν τὰς ἡμέρας
οὐδὲν ὀρθῶς, ἀλλ᾽ ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω κυδοιδοπᾶν,
ὥστ᾽ ἀπειλεῖν φησιν αὐτῇ τοὺς θεοὺς ἑκάστοτε
ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν ψευσθῶσι δείπνου κἀπίωσιν οἴκαδε,
τῆς ἑορτῆς μὴ τυχόντες κατὰ λόγον τῶν ἡμερῶν.
Κἄθ᾽ ὅταν θύειν δέῃ, στρεβλοῦτε καὶ δικάζετε,
πολλάκις δ᾽ ἡμῶν ἀγόντων τῶν θεῶν ἀπαστίαν,
ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν πενθῶμεν ἢ τὸν Μέμνον᾽ ἢ Σαρπηδόνα,
σπένδεθ᾽ ὑμεῖς καὶ γελᾶτ᾽ · ἀνθ᾽ ὧν λαχὼν Ὑπέρβολος
τῆτες ἱερομνημονεῖν, κἄπειθ᾽ ὑφ᾽ἡμῶν τῶν θεῶν
τὸν στέφανον ἀφῃρέθη · μᾶλλον γὰρ οὕτως εἴσεται
κατὰ σελήνην ὡς ἄγειν χρὴ τοῦ βίου τὰς ἡμέρας.

Σωκράτης
Μὰ τὴν Ἀναπνοὴν μὰ τὸ Χάος μὰ τὸν Ἀέρα
οὐκ εἶδον οὕτως ἄνδρ᾽ ἄγροικον οὐδένα
οὐδ᾽ ἄπορον οὐδὲ σκαιὸν οὐδ᾽ἐπιλήσμονα,
ὅστις σκαλαθυρμάτι᾽ ἄττα μικρὰ μανθάνων
ταῦτ᾽ ἐπιλέλησται πρὶν μαθεῖν. Ὅμως γε μὴν
αὐτὸν καλῶ θύραζε δευρὶ πρὸς τὸ φῶς.
Ποῦ Στρεψιάδης; ἔξει τὸν ἀσκάντην λαβών;

Στρεψιάδης
Ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐῶσί μ᾽ἐξενεγκεῖν οἱ κόρεις.

Σωκράτης
Ἀνύσας τι κατάθου καὶ πρόσεχε τὸν νοῦν.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἰδού.

Σωκράτης
Ἄγε δὴ τί βούλει πρῶτα νυνὶ μανθάνειν
ὧν οὐκ ἐδιδάχθης πώποτ᾽ οὐδέν ; Εἰπέ μοι.
Πότερον περὶ μέτρων ἢ περὶ ἐπῶν ἢ ῥυθμῶν ;

Στρεψιάδης
Περὶ τῶν μέτρων ἔγωγ᾽ · ἔναγχος γάρ ποτε
ὑπ᾽ ἀλφιταμοιβοῦ παρεκόπην διχοινίκῳ.

Σωκράτης
Οὐ τοῦτ᾽ ἐρωτῶ σ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὅ τι κάλλιστον μέτρον
ἡγεῖ, πότερον τὸ τρίμετρον ἢ τὸ τετράμετρον ;

Στρεψιάδης
Ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδὲν πρότερον ἡμιεκτέου.

Σωκράτης
Οὐδὲν λέγεις ὦνθρωπε.

Στρεψιάδης

Περίδου νυν ἐμοί,
εἰ μὴ τετράμετρόν ἐστιν ἡμιεκτέον. 645

Σωκράτης
Εἰς κόρακας. Ὡς ἄγροικος εἶ καὶ δυσμαθής.
Ταχύ γ' ἂν δύναιο μανθάνειν περὶ ῥυθμῶν.

Στρεψιάδης
Τί δέ μ' ὠφελήσουσ' οἱ ῥυθμοὶ πρὸς τἄλφιτα ;

Σωκράτης
Πρῶτον μὲν εἶναι κομψὸν ἐν συνουσίᾳ,
ἐπαί¨ονθ' ὁποῖός ἐστι τῶν ῥυθμῶν 650
κατ' ἐνόπλιον, χὠποῖος αὖ κατὰ δάκτυλον.

Στρεψιάδης
Κατὰ δάκτυλον ; Νὴ τὸν Δί', ἀλλ' οἶδ'.

Σωκράτης
Εἰπὲ δή.

Στρεψιάδης
τίς ἄλλος ἀντὶ τουτουὶ τοῦ δακτύλου ;
Πρὸ τοῦ μέν, ἔτ' ἐμοῦ παιδὸς ὄντος, οὑτοσί.

Σωκράτης
Ἀγρεῖος εἶ καὶ σκαιός. 655

Στρεψιάδης
Οὐ γὰρ ᾠζυρὲ
τούτων ἐπιθυμῶ μανθάνειν οὐδέν.

Σωκράτης
Τί δαί;

Στρεψιάδης
Ἐκεῖν' ἐκεῖνο, τὸν ἀδικώτατον λόγον.

Σωκράτης
Ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερα δεῖ σε πρότερα τούτου μανθάνειν,
τῶν τετραπόδων ἅττ᾽ἐστὶν ὀρθῶς ἄρρενα.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἀλλ᾽ οἶδ᾽ ἔγωγε τἄρρεν᾽, εἰ μὴ μαίνομαι:
κριὸς τράγος ταῦρος κύων ἀλεκτρυών.

Σωκράτης
Ὁρᾷς ἃ πάσχεις ; Τήν τε θήλειαν καλεῖς
ἀλεκτρυόνα κατὰ ταὐτὸ καὶ τὸν ἄρρενα.

Στρεψιάδης
Πῶς δή, φέρε ;

Σωκράτης
Πῶς ; Ἀλεκτρυὼν κἀλεκτρυών.

Στρεψιάδης
Νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ. Νῦν δὲ πῶς με χρὴ καλεῖν ;

Σωκράτης
Ἀλεκτρύαιναν, τὸν δ᾽ ἕτερον ἀλέκτορα.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἀλεκτρύαιναν ; Εὖ γε νὴ τὸν Ἀέρα·
ὥστ᾽ἀντὶ τούτου τοῦ διδάγματος μόνου
διαλφιτώσω σου κύκλῳ τὴν κάρδοπον.

Σωκράτης
Ἰδοὺ μάλ᾽ αὖθις, τοῦθ᾽ ἕτερον. Τὴν κάρδοπον
ἄρρενα καλεῖς θήλειαν οὖσαν.

Στρεψιάδης
Τῷ τρόπῳ ;
Ἄρρενα καλῶ ᾽γὼ κάρδοπον ;

Σωκράτης
Μάλιστά γε,
ὥσπερ γε καὶ Κλεώνυμον.

Στρεψιάδης
Πῶς δή ; Φράσον.

Σωκράτης
Ταὐτὸν δύναταί σοι κάρδοπος Κλεωνύμῳ.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἀλλ᾽ ὦγάθ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἦν κάρδοπος Κλεωνύμῳ,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐν θυείᾳ στρογγύλῃ γ᾽ ἂν ἐμάττετο.
Ἀτὰρ τὸ λοιπὸν πῶς με χρὴ καλεῖν ;

Σωκράτης
Ὅπως ;
Τὴν καρδόπην, ὥσπερ καλεῖς τὴν Σωστράτην.

Στρεψιάδης
Τὴν καρδόπην θήλειαν ;

Σωκράτης
Ὀρθῶς γὰρ λέγεις.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἐκεῖνο δ᾽ ἦν ἄν· καρδόπη, Κλεωνύμη.

Σωκράτης
Ἔτι δή γε περὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων μαθεῖν σε δεῖ,
ἅττ᾽ ἄρρεν᾽ἐστίν, ἅττα δ᾽ αὐτῶν θήλεα.

Στρεψιάδης

Ἀλλ᾽ οἶδ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ ἃ θήλε᾽ ἐστίν.

Σωκράτης
Εἰπὲ δή.

Στρεψιάδης
Λύσιλλα Φίλιννα Κλειταγόρα Δημητρία.

Σωκράτης
Ἄρρενα δὲ ποῖα τῶν ὀνομάτων ; 685

Στρεψιάδης
Μυρία.
Φιλόξενος Μελησίας Ἀμυνίας.

Σωκράτης
Ἀλλ᾽ ὦ πόνηρε ταῦτά γ᾽ ἐστ᾽ οὐκ ἄρρενα.

Στρεψιάδης
Οὐκ ἄρρεν᾽ ὑμῖν ἐστιν ;

Σωκράτης
Οὐδαμῶς γ᾽, ἐπεὶ
πῶς ἂν καλέσειας ἐντυχὼν Ἀμυνίᾳ ;

Στρεψιάδης
Ὅπως ἄν ; Ὠδί· δεῦρο δεῦρ᾽, Ἀμεινία. 690

Σωκράτης
Ὁρᾷς ; Γυναῖκα τὴν Ἀμεινίαν καλεῖς.

Στρεψιάδης
Οὔκουν δικαίως ἥτις οὐ στρατεύεται ;
Ἀτὰρ τί ταῦθ᾽ ἃ πάντες ἴσμεν μανθάνω ;

Σωκράτης
Οὐδὲν μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ κατακλινεὶς δευρὶ —

Στρεψιάδης

Τί δρῶ ;

Σωκράτης
Ἐκφρόντισόν τι τῶν σεαυτοῦ πραγμάτων.

Στρεψιάδης
Μὴ δῆθ᾽, ἱκετεύω, ᾽νταῦθά γ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ εἴπερ γε χρή,
χαμαί μ᾽ ἔασον αὐτὰ ταῦτ᾽ ἐκφροντίσαι.

Σωκράτης
Οὐκ ἔστι παρὰ ταῦτ᾽ ἄλλα.

Στρεψιάδης
Κακοδαίμων ἐγώ.
Οἵαν δίκην τοῖς κόρεσι δώσω τήμερον.

Χορός
Φρόντιζε δὴ καὶ διάθρει πάντα τρόπον τε σαυτὸν
στρόβει πυκνώσας.
Ταχὺς δ᾽, ὅταν εἰς ἄπορον πέσῃς,
ἐπ᾽ἄλλο πήδα
νόημα φρενός· ὕπνος δ᾽ ἀπέστω γλυκύθυμος ὀμμάτων.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἀτταταῖ ἀτταταῖ.

Χορός
Τί πάσχεις ; Τί κάμνεις ;

Στρεψιάδης
Ἀπόλλυμαι δείλαιος. Ἐκ τοῦ σκίμποδος
δάκνουσί μ᾽ ἐξέρποντες οἱ Κορίνθιοι,
καὶ τὰς πλευρὰς δαρδάπτουσιν
καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐκπίνουσιν
καὶ τοὺς ὄρχεις ἐξέλκουσιν
καὶ τὸν πρωκτὸν διορύττουσιν,

καί μ’ ἀπολοῦσιν.

Χορός
Μή νυν βαρέως ἄλγει λίαν.

Στρεψιάδης
Καὶ πῶς ; Ὅτε μου
φροῦδα τὰ χρήματα, φρούδη χροιά,
φρούδη ψυχή, φρούδη δ’ἐμβάς:
καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἔτι τοῖσι κακοῖς
φρουρᾶς ἄδων
ὀλίγου φροῦδος γεγένημαι.

Σωκράτης
Οὗτος τί ποιεῖς ; Οὐχὶ φροντίζεις ;

Στρεψιάδης
Ἐγώ ;
Νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ.

Σωκράτης
Καὶ τί δῆτ’ ἐφρόντισας;

Στρεψιάδης
Ὑπὸ τῶν κόρεων εἴ μού τι περιλειφθήσεται.

Σωκράτης
Ἀπολεῖ κάκιστ’.

Στρεψιάδης
Ἀλλ’ ὦγάθ’ ἀπόλωλ’ ἀρτίως.

Σωκράτης
Οὐ μαλθακιστέ’ ἀλλὰ περικαλυπτέα.
ἐξευρετέος γὰρ νοῦς ἀποστερητικὸς
κἀπαιόλημ’.

Στρεψιάδης
Οἴμοι τίς ἂν δῆτ’ἐπιβάλοι

ἐξ ἀρνακίδων γνώμην ἀποστερητρίδα ;

Σωκράτης
φέρε νυν ἀθρήσω πρῶτον ὅ τι δρᾷ τουτονί.
οὗτος καθεύδεις;
Στρεψιάδης
μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω ‘γὼ μὲν οὔ.
Σωκράτης
ἔχεις τι;
Στρεψιάδης
μὰ Δί’οὐ δῆτ’ἔγωγ’.
Σωκράτης
οὐδὲν
πάνυ;
Στρεψιάδης
οὐδέν γε πλὴν ἢ τὸ πέος ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ.
Σωκράτης
οὐκ ἐγκαλυψάμενος ταχέως τι φροντιεῖς;
Στρεψιάδης
περὶ τοῦ; σὺ γάρ μοι τοῦτο φράσον ὦ Σώκρατες.
Σωκράτης
αὐτὸς ὅ τι βούλει πρῶτος ἐξευρὼν λέγε.
Στρεψιάδης
ἀκήκοας μυριάκις ἀγὼ βούλομαι,
περὶ τῶν τόκων, ὅπως ἂν ἀποδῶ μηδενί.
Σωκράτης
ἴθι νῦν καλύπτου καὶ σχάσας τὴν φροντίδα
λεπτὴν κατὰ μικρὸν περιφρόνει τὰ πράγματα,
ὀρθῶς διαιρῶν καὶ σκοπῶν.
Στρεψιάδης
οἴμοι τάλας.
Σωκράτης
ἔχ’ἀτρέμα: κἂν ἀπορῇς τι τῶν νοημάτων,
ἀφεὶς ἄπελθε, [καὶ] κατὰ τὴν γνώμην πάλιν
κίνησον αὖθις αὐτὸ καὶ ζυγώθρισον.
Στρεψιάδης
ὦ Σωκρατίδιον φίλτατον.

Σωκράτης
τί ὦ γέρον;
Στρεψιάδης
ἔχω τόκου γνώμην ἀποστερητικήν.
Σωκράτης
ἐπίδειξον αὐτήν.
Στρεψιάδης
εἰπὲ δή νύν μοι —
Σωκράτης
τὸ τί;
Στρεψιάδης
γυναῖκα φαρμακίδ᾽εἰ πριάμενος Θετταλὴν
καθέλοιμι νύκτωρ τὴν σελήνην, εἶτα δὴ
αὐτὴν καθείρξαιμ᾽ἐς λοφεῖον στρογγύλον,
ὥσπερ κάτοπτρον, κᾆτα τηροίην ἔχων —
Σωκράτης
τί δῆτα τοῦτ᾽ἂν ὠφελήσειέν σ᾽;
Στρεψιάδης
ὅ τι;
εἰ μηκέτ᾽ἀνατέλλοι σελήνη μηδαμοῦ,
οὐκ ἂν ἀποδοίην τοὺς τόκους.
Σωκράτης
ὁτιὴ τί δή;
Στρεψιάδης
ὁτιὴ κατὰ μῆνα τἀγύριον δανείζεται.
Σωκράτης
εὖ γ᾽: ἀλλ᾽ἕτερον αὖ σοι προβαλῶ τι δεξιόν.
εἴ σοι γράφοιτο πεντετάλαντός τις δίκη,
ὅπως ἂν αὐτὴν ἀφανίσειας εἰπέ μοι.
Στρεψιάδης
ὅπως; ὅπως; οὐκ οἶδ᾽: ἀτὰρ ζητητέον.
Σωκράτης
μή νυν περὶ σαυτὸν εἶλλε τὴν γνώμην ἀεί,
ἀλλ᾽ἀποχάλα τὴν φροντίδ᾽ἐς τὸν ἀέρα
λινόδετον ὥσπερ μηλολόνθην τοῦ ποδός.
Στρεψιάδης
ηὕρηκ᾽ἀφάνισιν τῆς δίκης σοφωτάτην,
ὥστ᾽αὐτὸν ὁμολογεῖν σ᾽ἐμοί.
Σωκράτης

ποίαν τινά;
Στρεψιάδης
ἤδη παρὰ τοῖσι φαρμακοπώλαις τὴν λίθον
ταύτην ἑόρακας τὴν καλήν, τὴν διαφανῆ,
ἀφ᾽ ἧς τὸ πῦρ ἅπτουσι;
Σωκράτης
τὴν ὕαλον λέγεις;
Στρεψιάδης
ἔγωγε. φέρε τί δῆτ᾽ ἄν, εἰ ταύτην λαβών,
ὁπότε γράφοιτο τὴν δίκην ὁ γραμματεύς,
ἀπωτέρω στὰς ὧδε πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον
τὰ γράμματ᾽ ἐκτήξαιμι τῆς ἐμῆς δίκης;
Σωκράτης
σοφῶς γε νὴ τὰς Χάριτας.
Στρεψιάδης
οἴμ᾽ ὡς ἥδομαι
ὅτι πεντετάλαντος διαγέγραπταί μοι δίκη.
Σωκράτης
ἄγε δὴ ταχέως τουτὶ ξυνάρπασον.
Στρεψιάδης
τὸ τί;
Σωκράτης
ὅπως ἀποστρέψαι᾽ ἂν ἀντιδικῶν δίκην
μέλλων ὀφλήσειν μὴ παρόντων μαρτύρων.
Στρεψιάδης
φαυλότατα καὶ ῥᾷστ᾽.
Σωκράτης
εἰπὲ δή.
Στρεψιάδης
καὶ δὴ λέγω.
εἰ πρόσθεν ἔτι μιᾶς ἐνεστώσης δίκης,
πρὶν τὴν ἐμὴν καλεῖσθ᾽, ἀπαγξαίμην τρέχων.
Σωκράτης
οὐδὲν λέγεις.
Στρεψιάδης
νὴ τοὺς θεούς ἔγωγ᾽, ἐπεὶ
οὐδεὶς κατ᾽ ἐμοῦ τεθνεῶτος εἰσάξει δίκην.
Σωκράτης
ὑθλεῖς: ἄπερρ᾽, οὐκ ἂν διδάξαιμ᾽ ἄν σ᾽ ἔτι.

Στρεψιάδης
ὁτιὴ τί; ναὶ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν ὦ Σώκρατες.
Σωκράτης
785 ἀλλ᾽εὐθὺς ἐπιλήθει σύ γ᾽ἄττ᾽ἂν καὶ μάθῃς:
ἐπεὶ τί νυνὶ πρῶτον ἐδιδάχθης; λέγε.
Στρεψιάδης
φέρ᾽ἴδω τί μέντοι πρῶτον ἦν; τί πρῶτον ἦν;
τίς ἦν ἐν ᾗ ‘ματτόμεθα μέντοι τἄλφιτα;
οἴμοι τίς ἦν;
Σωκράτης
οὐκ ἐς κόρακας ἀποφθερεῖ,
790 ἐπιλησμότατον καὶ σκαιότατον γερόντιον;
Στρεψιάδης
οἴμοι τί οὖν δῆθ᾽ὁ κακοδαίμων πείσομαι;
ἀπὸ γὰρ ὀλοῦμαι μὴ μαθὼν γλωττοστροφεῖν.
ἀλλ᾽ὦ Νεφέλαι χρηστόν τι συμβουλεύσατε.
Χορός
ἡμεῖς μὲν ὦ πρεσβῦτα συμβουλεύομεν,
795 εἴ σοί τις υἱός ἐστιν ἐκτεθραμμένος,
πέμπειν ἐκεῖνον ἀντὶ σαυτοῦ μανθάνειν.
Στρεψιάδης
ἀλλ᾽ἔστ᾽ἔμοιγ᾽υἱὸς καλός τε κἀγαθός:
ἀλλ᾽οὐκ ἐθέλει γὰρ μανθάνειν. τί ἐγὼ πάθω;
Χορός
σὺ δ᾽ἐπιτρέπεις;
Στρεψιάδης
εὐσωματεῖ γὰρ καὶ σφριγᾷ,
800 κἄστ᾽ἐκ γυναικῶν εὐπτέρων τῶν Κοισύρας.
ἀτὰρ μέτειμί γ᾽αὐτόν: ἢν δὲ μὴ ‘θέλῃ,
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ὅπως οὐκ ἐξελῶ κ᾽τῆς οἰκίας.
ἀλλ᾽ἐπανάμεινόν μ᾽ὀλίγον εἰσελθὼν χρόνον.
Χορός
804 ἆρ᾽αἰσθάνει πλεῖστα δι᾽ἡμᾶς ἀγάθ᾽αὐτίχ᾽ἕξων
μόνας θεῶν; ὡς
ἕτοιμος ὅδ᾽ἐστὶν ἅπαντα δρᾶν
ὅσ᾽ἂν κελεύῃς.
σὺ δ᾽ἀνδρὸς ἐκπεπληγμένου καὶ φανερῶς ἐπηρμένου
810 γνοὺς ἀπολάψεις ὅ τι πλεῖστον δύνασαι,
ταχέως: φιλεῖ γάρ πως τὰ τοιαῦθ᾽ἑτέρᾳ τρέπεσθαι.

Στρεψιάδης
οὗτοι μὰ τὴν Ὁμίχλην ἔτ᾽ἐνταυθοῖ μενεῖς:
ἀλλ᾽ἔσθι᾽ἐλθὼν τοὺς Μεγακλέους κίονας.
Φειδιππίδης
ὦ δαιμόνιε, τί χρῆμα πάσχεις ὦ πάτερ;
οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖς μὰ τὸν Δία τὸν Ὀλύμπιον.
Στρεψιάδης
ἰδού γ᾽ἰδού, Δί᾽Ὀλύμπιον: τῆς μωρίας,
τὸν Δία νομίζειν ὄντα τηλικουτονί.
Φειδιππίδης
τί δὲ τοῦτ᾽ἐγέλασας ἐτεόν;
Στρεψιάδης
ἐνθυμούμενος
ὅτι παιδάριον εἶ καὶ φρονεῖς ἀρχαιϊκά.
ὅμως γε μὴν πρόσελθ᾽, ἵν᾽εἰδῇς πλείονα,
καί σοι φράσω τι πρᾶγμ᾽ὃ μαθὼν ἀνὴρ ἔσει.
ὅπως δὲ τοῦτο μὴ διδάξεις μηδένα.
Φειδιππίδης
ἰδού: τί ἔστιν;
Στρεψιάδης
ὤμοσας νυνὶ Δία.
Φειδιππίδης
ἔγωγ᾽.
Στρεψιάδης
ὁρᾷς οὖν ὡς ἀγαθὸν τὸ μανθάνειν;
οὐκ ἔστιν ὦ Φειδιππίδη Ζεύς.
Φειδιππίδης
ἀλλὰ τίς;
Στρεψιάδης
Δῖνος βασιλεύει τὸν Δί᾽ἐξεληλακώς.
Φειδιππίδης
αἰβοῖ τί ληρεῖς;
Στρεψιάδης
ἴσθι τοῦθ᾽οὕτως ἔχον.
Φειδιππίδης
τίς φησι ταῦτα;
Στρεψιάδης
Σωκράτης ὁ Μήλιος
καὶ Χαιρεφῶν, ὃς οἶδε τὰ ψυλλῶν ἴχνη.

Φειδιππίδης
σὺ δ’ἐς τοσοῦτον τῶν μανιῶν ἐλήλυθας
ὥστ’ἀνδράσιν πείθει χολῶσιν;
Στρεψιάδης
εὐστόμει
καὶ μηδὲν εἴπῃς φλαῦρον ἄνδρας δεξιοὺς
καὶ νοῦν ἔχοντας: ὧν ὑπὸ τῆς φειδωλίας
ἀπεκείρατ’οὐδεὶς πώποτ’οὐδ’ἠλείψατο,
οὐδ’ἐς βαλανεῖον ἦλθε λουσόμενος: σὺ δὲ
ὥσπερ τεθνεῶτος καταλόει μου τὸν βίον.
ἀλλ’ὡς τάχιστ’ἐλθὼν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ μάνθανε.
Φειδιππίδης
τί δ’ἂν παρ’ἐκείνων καὶ μάθοι χρηστόν τις ἄν;
Στρεψιάδης
ἄληθες; ὅσαπερ ἔστ’ἐν ἀνθρώποις σοφά:
γνώσει δὲ σαυτὸν ὡς ἀμαθὴς εἶ καὶ παχύς.
ἀλλ’ἐπανάμεινόν μ’ὀλίγον ἐνταυθοῖ χρόνον.
Φειδιππίδης
οἴμοι τί δράσω παραφρονοῦντος τοῦ πατρός;
πότερον παρανοίας αὐτὸν εἰσαγαγὼν ἕλω,
ἢ τοῖς σοροπηγοῖς τὴν μανίαν αὐτοῦ φράσω;
Στρεψιάδης
φέρ’ἴδω, σὺ τοῦτον τί ὀνομάζεις; εἰπέ μοι.
Φειδιππίδης
ἀλεκτρυόνα.
Στρεψιάδης
καλῶς γε. ταυτηνὶ δὲ τί;
Φειδιππίδης
ἀλεκτρυόν’.
Στρεψιάδης
ἄμφω ταὐτό; καταγέλαστος εἶ.
μή νυν τὸ λοιπόν, ἀλλὰ τήνδε μὲν καλεῖν
ἀλεκτρύαιναν τουτονὶ δ’ἀλέκτορα.
Φειδιππίδης
ἀλεκτρύαιναν; ταῦτ’ἔμαθες τὰ δεξιὰ
εἴσω παρελθὼν ἄρτι παρὰ τοὺς γηγενεῖς;
Στρεψιάδης
χἄτερά γε πόλλ’: ἀλλ’ὅ τι μάθοιμ’ἑκάστοτε,
ἐπελανθανόμην ἂν εὐθὺς ὑπὸ πλήθους ἐτῶν.

Φειδιππίδης
διὰ ταῦτα δὴ καὶ θοἰμάτιον ἀπώλεσας;
Στρεψιάδης
ἀλλ᾽οὐκ ἀπολώλεκ᾽, ἀλλὰ καταπεθρόντικα.
Φειδιππίδης
τὰς δ᾽ἐμβάδας ποῖ τέτροφας ὦνόητε σύ;
Στρεψιάδης
ὥσπερ Περικλέης ἐς τὸ δέον ἀπώλεσα.
ἀλλ᾽ἴθι βάδιζ᾽, ἴωμεν: εἶτα τῷ πατρὶ
πιθόμενος ἐξάμαρτε: κἀγώ τοί ποτε,
οἶδ᾽, ἐξέτει σοι τραυλίσαντι πιθόμενος,
ὃν πρῶτον ὀβολὸν ἔλαβον ἡλιαστικόν,
τούτου ‘πριάμην σοι Διασίοις ἁμαξίδα.
Φειδιππίδης
ἦ μὴν σὺ τούτοις τῷ χρόνῳ ποτ᾽ἀχθέσει.
Στρεψιάδης
εὖ γ᾽ὅτι ἐπείσθης. δεῦρο δεῦρ᾽ὦ Σώκρατες,
ἔξελθ᾽: ἄγω γάρ σοι τὸν υἱὸν τουτονὶ
ἄκοντ᾽ἀναπείσας.
Σωκράτης
νηπύτιος γάρ ἐστ᾽ἔτι,
καὶ τῶν κρεμαθρῶν οὔπω τρίβων τῶν ἐνθάδε.
Φειδιππίδης
αὐτὸς τρίβων εἴης ἄν, εἰ κρέμαιό γε.
Στρεψιάδης
οὐκ ἐς κόρακας; καταρᾷ σὺ τῷ διδασκάλῳ;
Σωκράτης
ἰδοὺ κρέμαι᾽, ὡς ἠλίθιον ἐφθέγξατο
καὶ τοῖσι χείλεσιν διερρυηκόσιν.
πῶς ἂν μάθοι ποθ᾽οὗτος ἀπόφυξιν δίκης
ἢ κλῆσιν ἢ χαύνωσιν ἀναπειστηρίαν;
καίτοι γε ταλάντου τοῦτ᾽ἔμαθεν Ὑπέρβολος.
Στρεψιάδης
ἀμέλει δίδασκε: θυμόσοφός ἐστιν φύσει:
εὐθύς γέ τοι παιδάριον ὂν τυννουτονὶ
ἔπλαττεν ἔνδον οἰκίας ναῦς τ᾽ἔγλυφεν,
ἁμαξίδας τε σκυτίνας ἠργάζετο,
κἀκ τῶν σιδίων βατράχους ἐποίει πῶς δοκεῖς.
ὅπως δ᾽ἐκείνω τὼ λόγω μαθήσεται,

τὸν κρείττον᾽ὅστις ἐστὶ καὶ τὸν ἥττονα,
ὃς τἄδικα λέγων ἀνατρέπει τὸν κρείττονα:
ἐὰν δὲ μή, τὸν γοῦν ἄδικον πάσῃ τέχνῃ.
Σωκράτης
αὐτὸς μαθήσεται παρ᾽αὐτοῖν τοῖν λόγοιν.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ἀπέσομαι.
Στρεψιάδης
τοῦτό νυν μέμνησ᾽, ὅπως
πρὸς πάντα τὰ δίκαι᾽ἀντιλέγειν δυνήσεται.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
χώρει δευρί, δεῖξον σαυτὸν
τοῖσι θεαταῖς, καίπερ θρασὺς ὤν.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
ἴθ᾽ὅποι χρῄζεις. πολὺ γὰρ μᾶλλόν ‘ς
ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖσι λέγων ἀπολῶ.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
ἀπολεῖς σύ; τίς ὤν;
Ἄδικος Λόγος
λόγος.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
ἥττων
γ᾽ὤν.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
ἀλλά σε νικῶ τὸν ἐμοῦ κρείττω
φάσκοντ᾽εἶναι.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
τί σοφὸν ποιῶν;
Ἄδικος Λόγος
γνώμας καινὰς ἐξευρίσκων.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
ταῦτα γὰρ ἀνθεῖ διὰ τουτουσὶ
τοὺς ἀνοήτους.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
οὔκ, ἀλλὰ σοφούς.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
ἀπολῶ σε κακῶς.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
εἰπὲ τί ποιῶν;
Δίκαιος Λόγος

τὰ δίκαια λέγων.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
ἀλλ᾽ἀνατρέψω γ᾽αὖτ᾽ἀντιλέγων:
οὐδὲ γὰρ εἶναι πάνυ φημὶ δίκην.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
οὐκ εἶναι φῄς;
Ἄδικος Λόγος
φέρε γὰρ ποῦ ‘στιν;
Δίκαιος Λόγος
παρὰ τοῖσι θεοῖς.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
πῶς δῆτα δίκης οὔσης ὁ Ζεὺς
905 οὐκ ἀπόλωλεν τὸν πατέρ᾽αὐτοῦ
δήσας;
Δίκαιος Λόγος
αἰβοῖ τουτὶ καὶ δὴ
χωρεῖ τὸ κακόν: δότε μοι λεκάνην.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
τυφογέρων εἶ κἀνάρμοστος.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
καταπύγων εἶ κἀναίσχυντος.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
910 ῥόδα μ᾽εἴρηκας.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
καὶ βωμολόχος.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
κρίνεσι στεφανοῖς.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
καὶ πατραλοίας.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
χρυσῷ πάττων μ᾽οὐ γιγνώσκεις.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
οὐ δῆτα πρὸ τοῦ γ᾽, ἀλλὰ μολύβδῳ.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
νῦν δέ γε κόσμος τοῦτ᾽ἐστὶν ἐμοί.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
915 θρασὺς εἶ πολλοῦ.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
σὺ δέ γ᾽ἀρχαῖος.

Δίκαιος Λόγος
διὰ σὲ δὲ φοιτᾶν
οὐδεὶς ἐθέλει τῶν μειρακίων:
καὶ γνωσθήσει ποτ᾽Ἀθηναίοις
οἷα διδάσκεις τοὺς ἀνοήτους.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
αὐχμεῖς αἰσχρῶς.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
σὺ δέ γ᾽εὖ πράττεις.
921 καίτοι πρότερόν γ᾽ἐπτώχευες,
Τήλεφος εἶναι Μυσὸς φάσκων,
ἐκ πηριδίου
γνώμας τρώγων Πανδελετείους.

Ἄδικος Λόγος
925 ὤμοι σοφίας —

Δίκαιος Λόγος
ὤμοι μανίας —
Ἄδικος Λόγος
ἧς ἐμνήσθης —
Δίκαιος Λόγος
τῆς σῆς, πόλεώς θ᾽ἥτις σε τρέφει
λυμαινόμενον τοῖς μειρακίοις.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
οὐχὶ διδάξεις τοῦτον Κρόνος ὤν.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
930 εἴπερ γ᾽αὐτὸν σωθῆναι χρὴ
καὶ μὴ λαλιὰν μόνον ἀσκῆσαι.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
δεῦρ᾽ἴθι, τοῦτον δ᾽ἔα μαίνεσθαι.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
κλαύσει, τὴν χεῖρ᾽ἣν ἐπιβάλλῃς.
Χορός
παύσασθε μάχης καὶ λοιδορίας.
935 ἀλλ᾽ἐπίδειξαι σύ τε τοὺς προτέρους
ἅττ᾽ἐδίδασκες, σύ τε τὴν καινὴν
παίδευσιν, ὅπως ἂν ἀκούσας σφῷν
ἀντιλεγόντοιν κρίνας φοιτᾷ.

Δίκαιος Λόγος
δρᾶν ταῦτ᾽ἐθέλω.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
κἄγωγ᾽ἐθέλω.
Χορός
φέρε δὴ πότερος λέξει πρότερος;
Ἄδικος Λόγος
τούτῳ δώσω:
κᾆτ᾽ἐκ τούτων ὧν ἂν λέξῃ
ῥηματίοισιν καινοῖς αὐτὸν
καὶ διανοίαις κατατοξεύσω.
τὸ τελευταῖον δ᾽, ἢν ἀναγρύζῃ,
τὸ πρόσωπον ἅπαν καὶ τὠφθαλμὼ
κεντούμενος ὥσπερ ὑπ᾽ἀνθρηνῶν
ὑπὸ τῶν γνωμῶν ἀπολεῖται.
Χορός
νῦν δείξετον τὼ πισύνω τοῖς περιδεξίοισι
λόγοισι καὶ φροντίσι καὶ γνωμοτύποις μερίμναις,
ὁπότερος αὐτοῖν λέγων ἀμείνων φανήσεται.
νῦν γὰρ ἅπας ἐνθάδε κίνδυνος ἀνεῖται σοφίας,
ἧς πέρι τοῖς ἐμοῖς φίλοις ἐστὶν ἀγὼν μέγιστος.
ἀλλ᾽ὦ πολλοῖς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους ἤθεσι χρηστοῖς στεφανώσας,
ῥῆξον φωνὴν ἥτινι χαίρεις, καὶ τὴν σαυτοῦ φύσιν εἰπέ.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
λέξω τοίνυν τὴν ἀρχαίαν παιδείαν ὡς διέκειτο,
ὅτ᾽ἐγὼ τὰ δίκαια λέγων ἤνθουν καὶ σωφροσύνη ‘νενόμιστο.
πρῶτον μὲν ἔδει παιδὸς φωνὴν γρύξαντος μηδὲν ἀκοῦσαι:
εἶτα βαδίζειν ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς εὐτάκτως ἐς κιθαριστοῦ
τοὺς κωμήτας γυμνοὺς ἀθρόους, κεἰ κριμνώδη κατανείφοι.
εἶτ᾽αὖ προμαθεῖν ᾆσμ᾽ἐδίδασκεν τὼ μηρὼ μὴ ξυνέχοντας,
ἢ ‘Παλλάδα περσέπολιν δεινὰν᾽ἢ ‘τηλέπορόν τι βόαμα,’
ἐντειναμένους τὴν ἁρμονίαν, ἣν οἱ πατέρες παρέδωκαν.
εἰ δέ τις αὐτῶν βωμολοχεύσαιτ᾽ἢ κάμψειέν τινα καμπήν,
οἵας οἱ νῦν τὰς κατὰ Φρῦνιν ταύτας τὰς δυσκολοκάμπτους,
ἐπετρίβετο τυπτόμενος πολλὰς ὡς τὰς Μούσας ἀφανίζων.
ἐν παιδοτρίβου δὲ καθίζοντας τὸν μηρὸν ἔδει προβαλέσθαι
τοὺς παῖδας, ὅπως τοῖς ἔξωθεν μηδὲν δείξειαν ἀπηνές:
εἶτ᾽αὖ πάλιν αὖθις ἀνιστάμενον συμψῆσαι, καὶ προνοεῖσθαι
εἴδωλον τοῖσιν ἐρασταῖσιν τῆς ἥβης μὴ καταλείπειν.

ἠλείψατο δ᾽ἂν τοὐμφαλοῦ οὐδεὶς παῖς ὑπένερθεν τότ᾽ἄν, ὥστε
τοῖς αἰδοίοισι δρόσος καὶ χνοῦς ὥσπερ μήλοισιν ἐπήνθει:
οὐδ᾽ἂν μαλακὴν φυρασάμενος τὴν φωνὴν πρὸς τὸν ἐραστὴν
980 αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν προαγωγεύων τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐβάδιζεν,
οὐδ᾽ἀνελέσθαι δειπνοῦντ᾽ἐξῆν καὶ κεφάλαιον ῥαφανῖδος,
οὐδ᾽ἄννηθον τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἁρπάζειν οὐδὲ σέλινον,
οὐδ᾽ὀψοφαγεῖν οὐδὲ κιχλίζειν οὐδ᾽ἴσχειν τὼ πόδ᾽ἐναλλάξ.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
ἀρχαῖά γε καὶ Διιπολιώδη καὶ τεττίγων ἀνάμεστα
985 καὶ Κηκείδου καὶ Βουφονίων.
Δίκαιος Λόγος
ἀλλ᾽οὖν ταῦτ᾽ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνα,
ἐξ ὧν ἄνδρας Μαραθωνομάχας ἡμὴ παίδευσις ἔθρεψεν.
σὺ δὲ τοὺς νῦν εὐθὺς ἐν ἱματίοισι διδάσκεις ἐντετυλίχθαι:
ὥστε μ᾽ἀπάγχεσθ᾽, ὅταν ὀρχεῖσθαι Παναθηναίοις δέον αὐτοὺς
τὴν ἀσπίδα τῆς κωλῆς προέχων ἀμελῇ τῆς Τριτογενείας.
990 πρὸς ταῦτ᾽ὦ μειράκιον θαρρῶν ἐμὲ τὸν κρείττω λόγον αἱροῦ:
κἀπιστήσει μισεῖν ἀγορὰν καὶ βαλανείων ἀπέχεσθαι,
καὶ τοῖς αἰσχροῖς αἰσχύνεσθαι, κἂν σκώπτῃ τίς σε φλέγεσθαι:
καὶ τῶν θάκων τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ὑπανίστασθαι προσιοῦσιν,
καὶ μὴ περὶ τοὺς σαυτοῦ γονέας σκαιουργεῖν, ἄλλο τε μηδὲν
995 αἰσχρὸν ποιεῖν, ὅτι τῆς αἰδοῦς μέλλεις τἄγαλμ᾽ἀναπλάττειν:
μηδ᾽εἰς ὀρχηστρίδος εἰσᾴττειν, ἵνα μὴ πρὸς ταῦτα κεχηνὼς
μήλῳ βληθεὶς ὑπὸ πορνιδίου τῆς εὐκλείας ἀποθραυσθῇς:
μηδ᾽ἀντειπεῖν τῷ πατρὶ μηδέν, μηδ᾽Ἰαπετὸν καλέσαντα
μνησικακῆσαι τὴν ἡλικίαν ἐξ ἧς ἐνεοττοτροφήθης.
Ἄδικος Λόγος
1000 εἰ ταῦτ᾽ὦ μειράκιον πείσει τούτῳ, νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον
τοῖς Ἱπποκράτους υἱέσιν εἴξεις καὶ σε καλοῦσι βλιτομάμμαν.

Ἄδικος Λόγος
εἰ ταῦτ᾽ὦ μειράκιον πείσει τούτῳ, νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον 1000
τοῖς Ἱπποκράτους υἱέσιν εἴξεις καὶ σε καλοῦσι βλιτομάμμαν.

Δίκαιος Λόγος
ἀλλ᾽οὖν λιπαρός γε καὶ εὐανθὴς ἐν γυμνασίοις διατρίψεις,
οὐ στωμύλλων κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν τριβολεκτράπελ᾽οἷάπερ οἱ νῦν,

οὐδ᾽ἑλκόμενος περὶ πραγματίου γλισχραντιλογεξεπιτρίπτου:
ἀλλ᾽εἰς Ἀκαδήμειαν κατιὼν ὑπὸ ταῖς μορίαις ἀποθρέξει
στεφανωσάμενος καλάμῳ λευκῷ μετὰ σώφρονος ἡλικιώτου,
μίλακος ὄζων καὶ ἀπραγμοσύνης καὶ λεύκης φυλλοβολούσης,
ἦρος ἐν ὥρᾳ χαίρων, ὁπόταν πλάτανος πτελέᾳ ψιθυρίζῃ.
ἢν ταῦτα ποιῇς ἀγὼ φράζω,
καὶ πρὸς τούτοις προσέχῃς τὸν νοῦν,
ἕξεις ἀεὶ
στῆθος λιπαρόν, χροιὰν λαμπράν,
ὤμους μεγάλους, γλῶτταν βαιάν,
πυγὴν μεγάλην, πόσθην μικράν.
ἢν δ᾽ἅπερ οἱ νῦν ἐπιτηδεύῃς,
πρῶτα μὲν ἕξεις
χροιὰν ὠχράν, ὤμους μικρούς,
στῆθος λεπτόν, γλῶτταν μεγάλην,
πυγὴν μικράν, κωλῆν μεγάλην,
ψήφισμα μακρόν, καὶ σ᾽ἀναπείσει
τὸ μὲν αἰσχρὸν ἅπαν καλὸν ἡγεῖσθαι,
τὸ καλὸν δ᾽αἰσχρόν:
καὶ πρὸς τούτοις τῆς Ἀντιμάχου
καταπυγοσύνης ἀναπλήσει.

Χορός

ὦ καλλίπυργον σοφίαν κλεινοτάτην ἐπασκῶν,
ὡς ἡδύ σου τοῖσι λόγοις σῶφρον ἔπεστιν ἄνθος.
†εὐδαίμονες δ᾽ἦσαν ἄρ᾽οἱ ζῶντες τότ᾽ἐπὶ
τῶν προτέρων†: πρὸς τάδε σ᾽ὦ κομψοπρεπῆ μοῦσαν ἔχων,
δεῖ σε λέγειν τι καινόν, ὡς ηὐδοκίμηκεν ἀνήρ.
δεινῶν δέ σοι βουλευμάτων ἔοικε δεῖν πρὸς αὐτόν,
εἴπερ τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ὑπερβαλεῖ καὶ μὴ γέλωτ᾽ὀφλήσεις.

Ἄδικος Λόγος

καὶ μὴν πάλαι γ᾽ἐπνιγόμην τὰ σπλάγχνα κἀπεθύμουν
ἅπαντα ταῦτ᾽ἐναντίαις γνώμαισι συνταράξαι.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἥττων μὲν λόγος δι᾽αὐτὸ τοῦτ᾽ἐκλήθην
ἐν τοῖσι φροντισταῖσιν, ὅτι πρώτιστος ἐπενόησα
τοῖσιν νόμοις καὶ ταῖς δίκαις τἀναντί᾽ἀντιλέξαι.

καὶ τοῦτο πλεῖν ἢ μυρίων ἔστ᾽ ἄξιον στατήρων,
αἱρούμενον τοὺς ἥττονας λόγους ἔπειτα νικᾶν.
σκέψαι δὲ τὴν παίδευσιν ᾗ πέποιθεν ὡς ἐλέγξω,
ὅστις σε θερμῷ φησι λοῦσθαι πρῶτον οὐκ ἐάσειν.
καίτοι τίνα γνώμην ἔχων ψέγεις τὰ θερμὰ λουτρά;

Δίκαιος Λόγος
ὁτιὴ κάκιστόν ἐστι καὶ δειλὸν ποιεῖ τὸν ἄνδρα.

Ἄδικος Λόγος
ἐπίσχες: εὐθὺς γάρ σ᾽ ἔχω μέσον λαβὼν ἄφυκτον.
καί μοι φράσον, τῶν τοῦ Διὸς παίδων τίν᾽ ἄνδρ᾽ ἄριστον
ψυχὴν νομίζεις, εἰπέ, καὶ πλείστους πόνους πονῆσαι.

Δίκαιος Λόγος
ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδέν᾽ Ἡρακλέους βελτίον᾽ ἄνδρα κρίνω.

Ἄδικος Λόγος
ποῦ ψυχρὰ δῆτα πώποτ᾽ εἶδες Ἡράκλεια λουτρά;
καίτοι τίς ἀνδρειότερος ἦν;

Δίκαιος Λόγος
ταῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἐκεῖνα,
ἃ τῶν νεανίσκων ἀεὶ δι᾽ ἡμέρας λαλούντων
πλῆρες τὸ βαλανεῖον ποιεῖ, κενὰς δὲ τὰς παλαίστρας.

Ἄδικος Λόγος
εἶτ᾽ ἐν ἀγορᾷ τὴν διατριβὴν ψέγεις: ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐπαινῶ.
εἰ γὰρ πονηρὸν ἦν, Ὅμηρος οὐδέποτ᾽ ἂν ἐποίει
τὸν Νέστορ᾽ ἀγορητὴν ἂν οὐδὲ τοὺς σοφοὺς ἅπαντας.
ἄνειμι δῆτ᾽ ἐντεῦθεν ἐς τὴν γλῶτταν, ἣν ὁδὶ μὲν
οὔ φησι χρῆναι τοὺς νέους ἀσκεῖν, ἐγὼ δέ φημι.
καὶ σωφρονεῖν αὖ φησι χρῆναι: δύο κακὼ μεγίστω.
ἐπεὶ σὺ διὰ τὸ σωφρονεῖν τῷ πώποτ᾽ εἶδες ἥδη
ἀγαθάν τι γενόμενον, φράσον, καί μ᾽ ἐξέλεγξον εἰπών.

Δίκαιος Λόγος
πολλοῖς. ὁ γοῦν Πηλεὺς ἔλαβε διὰ τοῦτο τὴν μάχαιραν.

Ἄδικος Λόγος
μάχαιραν; ἀστεῖόν γε κέρδος ἔλαβεν ὁ κακοδαίμων.
Ὑπέρβολος δ᾽οὐκ τῶν λύχνων πλεῖν ἢ τάλαντα πολλὰ
εἵληφε διὰ πονηρίαν, ἀλλ᾽οὐ μὰ Δί᾽οὐ μάχαιραν.

Δίκαιος Λόγος
καὶ τὴν Θέτιν γ᾽ἔγημε διὰ τὸ σωφρονεῖν ὁ Πηλεύς.

Ἄδικος Λόγος
κᾆτ᾽ἀπολιποῦσά γ᾽αὐτὸν ᾤχετ᾽: οὐ γὰρ ἦν ὑβριστὴς
οὐδ᾽ἡδὺς ἐν τοῖς στρώμασιν τὴν νύκτα παννυχίζειν:
γυνὴ δὲ σιναμωρουμένη χαίρει: σὺ δ᾽εἶ Κρόνιππος.
σκέψαι γὰρ ὦ μειράκιον ἐν τῷ σωφρονεῖν ἅπαντα
ἄνεστιν, ἡδονῶν θ᾽ὅσων μέλλεις ἀποστερεῖσθαι,
παίδων γυναικῶν κοττάβων ὄψων πότων κιχλισμῶν.
καίτοι τί σοι ζῆν ἄξιον, τούτων ἐὰν στερηθῇς;
εἶεν. πάρειμ᾽ἐντεῦθεν ἐς τὰς τῆς φύσεως ἀνάγκας.
ἥμαρτες, ἠράσθης, ἐμοίχευσάς τι, κᾆτ᾽ἐλήφθης:
ἀπόλωλας: ἀδύνατος γὰρ εἶ λέγειν. ἐμοὶ δ᾽ὁμιλῶν
χρῶ τῇ φύσει, σκίρτα, γέλα, νόμιζε μηδὲν αἰσχρόν.
μοιχὸς γὰρ ἦν τύχῃς ἁλούς, τάδ᾽ἀντερεῖς πρὸς αὐτόν,
ὡς οὐδὲν ἠδίκηκας: εἶτ᾽ἐς τὸν Δί᾽ἐπανενεγκεῖν,
κἀκεῖνος ὡς ἥττων ἔρωτός ἐστι καὶ γυναικῶν:
καίτοι σὺ θνητὸς ὢν θεοῦ πῶς μεῖζον ἂν δύναιο;

Δίκαιος Λόγος
τί δ᾽ἢν ῥαφανιδωθῇ πιθόμενός σοι τέφρᾳ τε τιλθῇ,
ἕξει τινὰ γνώμην λέγειν τὸ μὴ εὐρύπρωκτος εἶναι;

Ἄδικος Λόγος
ἢν δ᾽εὐρύπρωκτος ᾖ, τί πείσεται κακόν;

Δίκαιος Λόγος
τί μὲν οὖν ἂν ἔτι μεῖζον πάθοι τούτου ποτέ;

Ἄδικος Λόγος
τί δῆτ᾽ἐρεῖς, ἢν τοῦτο νικηθῇς ἐμοῦ;

Δίκαιος Λόγος
σιγήσομαι. τί δ’ἄλλο;

Ἄδικος Λόγος
φέρε δή μοι φράσον:
συνηγοροῦσιν ἐκ τίνων;

Δίκαιος Λόγος
ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων. 1090

Ἄδικος Λόγος
πείθομαι.
τί δαί; τραγῳδοῦσ’ἐκ τίνων;

Δίκαιος Λόγος
ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων.

Ἄδικος Λόγος
εὖ λέγεις.
δημηγοροῦσι δ’ἐκ τίνων;

Δίκαιος Λόγος
ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων.

Ἄδικος Λόγος
ἆρα δῆτ’
ἔγνωκας ὡς οὐδὲν λέγεις; 1095
καὶ τῶν θεατῶν ὁπότεροι
πλείους σκόπει.

Δίκαιος Λόγος
καὶ δὴ σκοπῶ.

Ἄδικος Λόγος
τί δῆθ’ὁρᾷς; 1097B

Δίκαιος Λόγος
πολὺ πλείονας νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς

τοὺς εὐρυπρώκτους: τουτονὶ
γοῦν οἶδ᾽ἐγὼ κἀκεινονὶ 1100
καὶ τὸν κομήτην τουτονί.

Ἄδικος Λόγος
τί δῆτ᾽ἐρεῖς; 1101B

Δίκαιος Λόγος
ἡττήμεθ᾽: ὦ κινούμενοι
πρὸς τῶν θεῶν δέξασθέ μου
θοἰμάτιον, ὡς 1103B
ἐξαυτομολῶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

Σωκράτης
τί δῆτα; πότερα τοῦτον ἀπάγεσθαι λαβὼν 1105
βούλει τὸν υἱόν, ἢ διδάσκω σοι λέγειν;

Στρεψιάδης
δίδασκε καὶ κόλαζε καὶ μέμνησ᾽ὅπως
εὖ μοι στομώσεις αὐτόν, ἐπὶ μὲν θάτερα
οἷον δικιδίοις, τὴν δ᾽ἑτέραν αὐτοῦ γνάθον
στόμωσον οἵαν ἐς τὰ μείζω πράγματα. 1110

Σωκράτης
ἀμέλει κομιεῖ τοῦτον σοφιστὴν δεξιόν.

Φειδιππίδης
ὠχρὸν μὲν οὖν οἶμαί γε καὶ κακοδαίμονα.

Χορός
χωρεῖτέ νυν. οἶμαι δέ σοι
ταῦτα μεταμελήσειν.
τοὺς κριτὰς ἃ κερδανοῦσιν, ἤν τι τόνδε τὸν χορὸν 1115
ὠφελῶσ᾽ἐκ τῶν δικαίων, βουλόμεσθ᾽ἡμεῖς φράσαι.
πρῶτα μὲν γάρ, ἢν νεᾶν βούλησθ᾽ἐν ὥρᾳ τοὺς ἀγρούς,
ὕσομεν πρώτοισιν ὑμῖν, τοῖσι δ᾽ἄλλοις ὕστερον.
εἶτα τὸν καρπὸν τεκούσας ἀμπέλους φυλάξομεν,
ὥστε μήτ᾽αὐχμὸν πιέζειν μήτ᾽ἄγαν ἐπομβρίαν. 1120
ἢν δ᾽ἀτιμάσῃ τις ἡμᾶς θνητὸς ὢν οὔσας θεάς,

προσεχέτω τὸν νοῦν, πρὸς ἡμῶν οἷα πείσεται κακά,
λαμβάνων οὔτ᾽οἶνον οὔτ᾽ἄλλ᾽οὐδὲν ἐκ τοῦ χωρίου.
ἡνίκ᾽ἂν γὰρ αἵ τ᾽ἐλαῖαι βλαστάνωσ᾽αἵ τ᾽ἄμπελοι,
ἀποκεκόψονται: τοιαύταις σφενδόναις παιήσομεν.
ἢν δὲ πλινθεύοντ᾽ἴδωμεν, ὕσομεν καὶ τοῦ τέγους
τὸν κέραμον αὐτοῦ χαλάζαις στρογγύλαις συντρίψομεν.
κἂν γαμῇ ποτ᾽αὐτὸς ἢ τῶν ξυγγενῶν ἢ τῶν φίλων,
ὕσομεν τὴν νύκτα πᾶσαν: ὥστ᾽ἴσως βουλήσεται
κἂν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ τυχεῖν ὢν μᾶλλον ἢ κρῖναι κακῶς.

Στρεψιάδης
πέμπτη, τετράς, τρίτη, μετὰ ταύτην δευτέρα,
εἶθ᾽ἣν ἐγὼ μάλιστα πασῶν ἡμερῶν
δέδοικα καὶ πέφρικα καὶ βδελύττομαι,
εὐθὺς μετὰ ταύτην ἔσθ᾽ἕνη τε καὶ νέα.
πᾶς γάρ τις ὀμνὺς οἷς ὀφείλων τυγχάνω,
θείς μοι πρυτανεῖ᾽ἀπολεῖν μέ φησι κἀξολεῖν,
κἀμοῦ μέτριά τε καὶ δίκαι᾽αἰτουμένου,
‘ὦ δαιμόνιε τὸ μέν τι νυνὶ μὴ λάβῃς,
τὸ δ᾽ἀναβαλοῦ μοι, τὸ δ᾽ἄφες’, οὔ φασίν ποτε
οὕτως ἀπολήψεσθ᾽, ἀλλὰ λοιδοροῦσί με
ὡς ἄδικός εἰμι, καὶ δικάσεσθαί φασί μοι.
νῦν οὖν δικαζέσθων: ὀλίγον γάρ μοι μέλει,
εἴπερ μεμάθηκεν εὖ λέγειν Φειδιππίδης.
τάχα δ᾽εἴσομαι κόψας τὸ φροντιστήριον.
παῖ, ἠμί, παῖ παῖ.

Σωκράτης
Στρεψιάδην ἀσπάζομαι.

Στρεψιάδης
κἄγωγέ σ᾽: ἀλλὰ τουτονὶ πρῶτον λαβέ:
χρὴ γὰρ ἐπιθαυμάζειν τι τὸν διδάσκαλον.
καί μοι τὸν υἱὸν εἰ μεμάθηκε τὸν λόγον
ἐκεῖνον εἴφ᾽ὃν ἀρτίως εἰσήγαγες.

Σωκράτης

μεμάθηκεν.

Στρεψιάδης
εὖ γ᾽ ὦ παμβασίλει᾽ Ἀπαιόλη.

Σωκράτης
ὥστ᾽ ἀποφύγοις ἂν ἤντιν᾽ ἂν βούλῃ δίκην.

Στρεψιάδης
κεἰ μάρτυρες παρῆσαν, ὅτ᾽ ἐδανειζόμην;

Σωκράτης
πολλῷ γε μᾶλλον, κἂν παρῶσι χίλιοι.

Στρεψιάδης
βοάσομαί τἄρα τὰν ὑπέρτονον
βοάν. ἰὼ κλάετ᾽ ὦ ‘βολοστάται
αὐτοί τε καὶ τἀρχαῖα καὶ τόκοι τόκων:
οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄν με φλαῦρον ἐργάσαισθ᾽ ἔτι,
οἷος ἐμοὶ τρέφεται
τοῖσδ᾽ ἐνὶ δώμασι παῖς,
ἀμφήκει γλώττῃ λάμπων,
πρόβολος ἐμός, σωτὴρ δόμοις, ἐχθροῖς βλάβη,
λυσανίας πατρῴων μεγάλων κακῶν:
ὃν κάλεσον τρέχων ἔνδοθεν ὡς ἐμέ.

Σωκράτης
ὦ τέκνον ὦ παῖ ἔξελθ᾽ οἴκων,
ἄιε σοῦ πατρός.
ὅδ᾽ ἐκεῖνος ἀνήρ.

Στρεψιάδης
ὦ φίλος ὦ φίλος.

Σωκράτης
ἄπιθι συλλαβών.

Στρεψιάδης

ἰὼ ἰὼ τέκνον, ἰὼ ἰοῦ ἰοῦ.
ὡς ἥδομαί σου πρῶτα τὴν χρόαν ἰδών.
νῦν μέν γ᾽ἰδεῖν εἶ πρῶτον ἐξαρνητικὸς
κἀντιλογικός, καὶ τοῦτο τοὐπιχώριον
ἀτεχνῶς ἐπανθεῖ, τὸ ‘τί λέγεις σύ;’καὶ δοκεῖν
ἀδικοῦντ᾽ἀδικεῖσθαι καὶ κακουργοῦντ᾽οἶδ᾽ὅτι:
ἐπὶ τοῦ προσώπου τ᾽ἐστὶν Ἀττικὸν βλέπος.
νῦν οὖν ὅπως σώσεις μ᾽, ἐπεὶ κἀπώλεσας.

Φειδιππίδης
φοβεῖ δὲ δὴ τί;

Στρεψιάδης
τὴν ἔνην τε καὶ νέαν.

Φειδιππίδης
ἔνη γάρ ἐστι καὶ νέα τις ἡμέρα;

Στρεψιάδης
εἰς ἥν γε θήσειν τὰ πρυτανεῖά φασί μοι.

Φειδιππίδης
ἀπολοῦσ᾽ἄρ᾽αὖθ᾽οἱ θέντες: οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ᾽ὅπως
μί᾽ἡμέρα γένοιτ᾽ἂν ἡμέρα δύο.

Στρεψιάδης
οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο;

Φειδιππίδης
πῶς γάρ; εἰ μή πέρ γ᾽ἅμα
αὐτὴ γένοιτ᾽ἂν γραῦς τε καὶ νέα γυνή.

Στρεψιάδης
καὶ μὴν νενόμισταί γ᾽.

Φειδιππίδης
οὐ γάρ, οἶμαι, τὸν νόμον
ἴσασιν ὀρθῶς ὅ τι νοεῖ.

Στρεψιάδης

νοεῖ δὲ τί;

Φειδιππίδης
ὁ Σόλων ὁ παλαιὸς ἦν φιλόδημος τὴν φύσιν.

Στρεψιάδης
τουτὶ μὲν οὐδέν πω πρὸς ἔνην τε καὶ νέαν.

Φειδιππίδης
ἐκεῖνος οὖν τὴν κλῆσιν ἐς δύ᾽ ἡμέρας
ἔθηκεν, ἔς γε τὴν ἔνην τε καὶ νέαν,
ἵν᾽ αἱ θέσεις γίγνοιντο τῇ νουμηνίᾳ.

Στρεψιάδης
ἵνα δὴ τί τὴν ἔνην προσέθηχ᾽;

Φειδιππίδης
ἵν᾽ ὦ μέλε
παρόντες οἱ φεύγοντες ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ
πρότερον ἀπαλλάττοινθ᾽ἑκόντες, εἰ δὲ μή,
ἔωθεν ὑπανιῷντο τῇ νουμηνία.

Στρεψιάδης
πῶς οὐ δέχονται δῆτα τῇ νουμηνίᾳ
ἀρχαὶ τὰ πρυτανεῖ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ἔνῃ τε καὶ νέᾳ;

Φειδιππίδης
ὅπερ οἱ προτένθαι γὰρ δοκοῦσί μοι ποιεῖν:
ὅπως τάχιστα τὰ πρυτανεῖ᾽ὑφελοίατο,
διὰ τοῦτο προὐτένθευσαν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ.

Στρεψιάδης
εὖ γ᾽: ὦ κακοδαίμονες, τί κάθησθ᾽ἀβέλτεροι,
ἡμέτερα κέρδη τῶν σοφῶν ὄντες, λίθοι,
ἀριθμός, πρόβατ᾽ἄλλως, ἀμφορῆς νενησμένοι;
ὥστ᾽εἰς ἐμαυτὸν καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τουτονὶ
ἐπ᾽εὐτυχίαισιν ἀστέον μοὐγκώμιον.
‘μάκαρ ὦ Στρεψίαδες,
αὐτός τ᾽ἔφυς ὡς σοφὸς

χοῖον τὸν υἱὸν τρέφεις,’
φήσουσι δή μ’οἱ φίλοι
χοὶ δημόται
ζηλοῦντες ἡνίκ’ἂν σὺ νικᾷς λέγων τὰς δίκας.
ἀλλ’εἰσάγων σε βούλομαι πρῶτον ἑστιᾶσαι.

Πασίας
εἶτ’ἄνδρα τῶν αὐτοῦ τι χρὴ προι¨έναι;
οὐδέποτέ γ’, ἀλλὰ κρεῖττον εὐθὺς ἦν τότε
ἀπερυθριᾶσαι μᾶλλον ἢ σχεῖν πράγματα,
ὅτε τῶν ἐμαυτοῦ γ’ἕνεκα νυνὶ χρημάτων
ἕλκω σε κλητεύσοντα, καὶ γενήσομαι
ἐχθρὸς ἔτι πρὸς τούτοισιν ἀνδρὶ δημότῃ.
ἀτὰρ οὐδέποτέ γε τὴν πατρίδα καταισχυνῶ
ζῶν, ἀλλὰ καλοῦμαι Στρεψιάδην —

Στρεψιάδης
τίς οὐτοσί;

Πασίας
ἐς τὴν ἕνην τε καὶ νέαν.

Στρεψιάδης
μαρτύρομαι,
ὅτι ἐς δύ’εἶπεν ἡμέρας. τοῦ χρήματος;

Πασίας
τῶν δώδεκα μνῶν, ἃς ἔλαβες ὠνούμενος
τὸν ψαρὸν ἵππον.

Στρεψιάδης
ἵππον; οὐκ ἀκούετε;
ὃν πάντες ὑμεῖς ἴστε μισοῦνθ’ἱππικήν.

Πασίας
καὶ νὴ Δί’ἀποδώσειν γ’ἐπώμνυς τοὺς θεούς.

Στρεψιάδης
μὰ τὸν Δί᾽οὐ γάρ πω τότ᾽ἐξηπίστατο
Φειδιππίδης μοι τὸν ἀκατάβλητον λόγον.

Πασίας
νῦν δὲ διὰ τοῦτ᾽ἔξαρνος εἶναι διανοεῖ;

Στρεψιάδης
τί γὰρ ἄλλ᾽ἂν ἀπολαύσαιμι τοῦ μαθήματος;

Πασίας
καὶ ταῦτ᾽ἐθελήσεις ἀπομόσαι μοι τοὺς θεοὺς
ἵν᾽ἂν κελεύσω ‘γώ σε;

Στρεψιάδης
τοὺς ποίους θεούς;

Πασίας
τὸν Δία, τὸν Ἑρμῆν, τὸν Ποσειδῶ.

Στρεψιάδης
νὴ Δία
κἂν προσκαταθείην γ᾽ὥστ᾽ὀμόσαι τριώβολον.

Πασίας
ἀπόλοιο τοίνυν ἕνεκ᾽ἀναιδείας ἔτι.

Στρεψιάδης
ἁλσὶν διασμηχθεὶς ὄναιτ᾽ἂν οὑτοσί.

Πασίας
οἴμ᾽ὡς καταγελᾷς.

Στρεψιάδης
ἓξ χοᾶς χωρήσεται.

Πασίας
οὔ τοι μὰ τὸν Δία τὸν μέγαν καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς
ἐμοῦ καταπροίξει.

Στρεψιάδης
θαυμασίως ἥσθην θεοῖς,
καὶ Ζεὺς γέλοιος ὀμνύμενος τοῖς εἰδόσιν.

Πασίας
ἦ μὴν σὺ τούτων τῷ χρόνῳ δώσεις δίκην.
ἀλλ᾽εἴτ᾽ἀποδώσεις μοι τὰ χρήματ᾽εἴτε μή,
ἀπόπεμψον ἀποκρινάμενος.

Στρεψιάδης
ἔχε νυν ἥσυχος.
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτίκ᾽ἀποκρινοῦμαί σοι σαφῶς.

Πασίας
τί σοι δοκεῖ δράσειν;

Μάρτυς
ἀποδώσειν μοι δοκεῖ.

Στρεψιάδης
ποῦ ‘σθ᾽οὗτος ἀπαιτῶν με τἀργύριον; λέγε
τουτὶ τί ἔστι;

Πασίας
τοῦθ᾽ὅ τι ἐστί; κάρδοπος.

Στρεψιάδης
ἔπειτ᾽ἀπαιτεῖς τἀργύριον τοιοῦτος ὤν;
οὐκ ἂν ἀποδοίην οὐδ᾽ἂν ὀβολὸν οὐδενί,
ὅστις καλέσειε κάρδοπον τὴν καρδόπην.

Πασίας
οὐκ ἄρ᾽ἀποδώσεις;

Στρεψιάδης
οὐχ ὅσον γέ μ᾽εἰδέναι.
οὔκουν ἀνύσας τι θᾶττον ἀπολιταργιεῖς
ἀπὸ τῆς θύρας;

Πασίας
ἄπειμι, καὶ τοῦτ᾽ἴσθ᾽ὅτι
θήσω πρυτανεῖ᾽ἢ μηκέτι ζῴην ἐγώ.

Στρεψιάδης
καὶ προσαπολεῖς ἄρ᾽αὐτὰ πρὸς ταῖς δώδεκα.
καίτοι σε τοῦτό γ᾽οὐχὶ βούλομαι παθεῖν,
ὁτιὴ ‘κάλεσας εὐηθικῶς τὴν κάρδοπον.

Αμυνίας
ἰώ μοί μοι.

Στρεψιάδης
ἔα.
τίς οὐτοσί ποτ᾽ἔσθ᾽ὁ θρηνῶν; οὔτι που
τῶν Καρκίνου τις δαιμόνων ἐφθέγξατο;

Αμυνίας
τί δ᾽ὅστις εἰμὶ τοῦτο βούλεσθ᾽εἰδέναι;
ἀνὴρ κακοδαίμων.

Στρεψιάδης
κατὰ σεαυτόν νυν τρέπου.

Αμυνίας
ὦ σκληρὲ δαῖμον, ὦ τύχαι θραυσάντυγες
ἵππων ἐμῶν, ὦ Παλλὰς ὥς μ᾽ἀπώλεσας.

Στρεψιάδης
τί δαί σε Τληπόλεμός ποτ᾽εἴργασται κακόν;

Αμυνίας
μὴ σκῶπτέ μ᾽ὦ τᾶν, ἀλλά μοι τὰ χρήματα
τὸν υἱὸν ἀποδοῦναι κέλευσον ἅλαβεν,
ἄλλως τε μέντοι καὶ κακῶς πεπραγότι.

Στρεψιάδης
τὰ ποῖα ταῦτα χρήμαθ᾽;

Αμυνίας
ἀδανείσατο.

Στρεψιάδης
κακῶς ἄρ᾽ὄντως εἶχες, ὥς γ᾽ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς.

Αμυνίας
ἵππους ἐλαύνων ἐξέπεσον νὴ τοὺς θεούς.

Στρεψιάδης
τί δῆτα ληρεῖς ὥσπερ ἀπ᾽ὄνου καταπεσών;

Αμυνίας
ληρῶ, τὰ χρήματ᾽ἀπολαβεῖν εἰ βούλομαι;

Στρεψιάδης
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ὅπως σύ γ᾽αὐτὸς ὑγιαίνεις. 1275

Αμυνίας
τί δαί;

Στρεψιάδης
τὸν ἐγκέφαλον ὥσπερ σεσεῖσθαί μοι δοκεῖς.

Αμυνίας
σὺ δὲ νὴ τὸν Ἑρμῆν προσκεκλήσεσθαί γέ μοι,
εἰ μὴ ‘ποδώσεις τἀργύριον.

Στρεψιάδης
κάτειπέ νυν,
πότερα νομίζεις καινὸν ἀεὶ τὸν Δία
ὕειν ὕδωρ ἑκάστοτ᾽, ἢ τὸν ἥλιον 1280
ἕλκειν κάτωθεν ταὐτὸ τοῦθ᾽ὕδωρ πάλιν;

Αμυνίας
οὐκ οἶδ᾽ἔγωγ᾽ὁπότερον, οὐδέ μοι μέλει.

Στρεψιάδης

πῶς οὖν ἀπολαβεῖν τἀργύριον δίκαιος εἶ,
εἰ μηδὲν οἶσθα τῶν μετεώρων πραγμάτων;

Αμυνίας
ἀλλ᾽εἰ σπανίζεις, τἀργυρίου μοι τὸν τόκον
ἀπόδοτε:

Στρεψιάδης
τοῦτο δ᾽ἔσθ᾽ὁ τόκος τί θηρίον;

Αμυνίας
τί δ᾽ἄλλο γ᾽ἢ κατὰ μῆνα καὶ καθ᾽ἡμέραν
πλέον πλέον τἀργύριον ἀεὶ γίγνεται
ὑπορρέοντος τοῦ χρόνου;

Στρεψιάδης
καλῶς λέγεις.
τί δῆτα; τὴν θάλατταν ἔσθ᾽ὅτι πλείονα
νυνὶ νομίζεις ἢ πρὸ τοῦ;

Αμυνίας
μὰ Δί᾽ἀλλ᾽ἴσην.
οὐ γὰρ δίκαιον πλείον᾽εἶναι.

Στρεψιάδης
κᾆτα πῶς
αὕτη μὲν ὦ κακόδαιμον οὐδὲν γίγνεται
ἐπιρρεόντων τῶν ποταμῶν πλείων, σὺ δὲ
ζητεῖς ποιῆσαι τἀργύριον πλεῖον τὸ σόν;
οὐκ ἀποδιώξει σαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας;
φέρε μοι τὸ κέντρον.

Αμυνίας
ταῦτ᾽ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι.

Στρεψιάδης
ὕπαγε. τί μέλλεις; οὐκ ἐλᾷς ὦ σαμφόρα;

Αμυνίας

ταῦτ᾽οὐχ ὕβρις δῆτ᾽ἐστίν;

Στρεψιάδης
ἄξεις; ἐπιαλῶ
κεντῶν ὑπὸ τὸν πρωκτόν σε τὸν σειραφόρον.
φεύγεις; ἔμελλόν σ᾽ἆρα κινήσειν ἐγὼ
αὐτοῖς τροχοῖς τοῖς σοῖσι καὶ ξυνωρίσιν.

Χορός
οἷον τὸ πραγμάτων ἐρᾶν φλαύρων: ὁ γὰρ
γέρων ὅδ᾽ἐρασθεὶς
ἀποστερῆσαι βούλεται
τὰ χρήμαθ᾽ἁδανείσατο:
κοὐκ ἔσθ᾽ὅπως οὐ τήμερον
λήψεταί τι πρᾶγμ᾽, ὃ τοῦτον
ποιήσει τὸν σοφιστὴν [ἴσως,]
ἀνθ᾽ὧν πανουργεῖν ἤρξατ᾽, ἐξαίφνης λαβεῖν κακόν τι.
οἶμαι γὰρ αὐτὸν αὐτίχ᾽εὑρήσειν ὅπερ
πάλαι ποτ᾽†ἐπεζήτει†
εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν δεινόν οἱ
γνώμας ἐναντίας λέγειν
τοῖσιν δικαίοις, ὥστε νικᾶν
ἅπαντας οἷσπερ ἂν
ξυγγένηται, κἂν λέγῃ παμπόνηρ᾽.
ἴσως δ᾽ἴσως βουλήσεται κἄφωνον αὐτὸν εἶναι.

Στρεψιάδης
ἰοὺ ἰού.
ὦ γείτονες καὶ ξυγγενεῖς καὶ δημόται,
ἀμυνάθετέ μοι τυπτομένῳ πάσῃ τέχνῃ.
οἴμοι κακοδαίμων τῆς κεφαλῆς καὶ τῆς γνάθου.
ὦ μιαρὲ τύπτεις τὸν πατέρα;

Φειδιππίδης
φήμ᾽ὦ πάτερ.

Στρεψιάδης

ὁρᾶθ’ὁμολογοῦνθ’ὅτι με τύπτει.

Φειδιππίδης
καὶ μάλα.

Στρεψιάδης
ὦ μιαρὲ καὶ πατραλοῖα καὶ τοιχωρύχε.

Φειδιππίδης
αὖθίς με ταὐτὰ ταῦτα καὶ πλείω λέγε.
ἆρ’οἶσθ’ὅτι χαίρω πόλλ’ἀκούων καὶ κακά;

Στρεψιάδης
ὦ λακκόπρωκτε. 1330

Φειδιππίδης
πάττε πολλοῖς τοῖς ῥόδοις.

Στρεψιάδης
τὸν πατέρα τύπτεις;

Φειδιππίδης
κἀποφανῶ γε νὴ Δία
ὡς ἐν δίκῃ σ’ἔτυπτον.

Στρεψιάδης
ὦ μιαρώτατε,
καὶ πῶς γένοιτ’ἂν πατέρα τύπτειν ἐν δίκῃ;

Φειδιππίδης
ἔγωγ’ἀποδείξω καί σε νικήσω λέγων.

Στρεψιάδης
τουτὶ σὺ νικήσεις; 1335

Φειδιππίδης
πολύ γε καὶ ῥᾳδίως.
ἑλοῦ δ’ὁπότερον τοῖν λόγοιν βούλει λέγειν.

Στρεψιάδης
ποίοιν λόγοιν;

Φειδιππίδης
τὸν κρείττον᾽ ἢ τὸν ἥττονα.

Στρεψιάδης
ἐδιδαξάμην μέντοι σε νὴ Δί᾽ ὦ μέλε
τοῖσιν δικαίοις ἀντιλέγειν, εἰ ταῦτά γε
μέλλεις ἀναπείσειν, ὡς δίκαιον καὶ καλὸν
τὸν πατέρα τύπτεσθ᾽ ἐστὶν ὑπὸ τῶν υἱέων.

Φειδιππίδης
ἀλλ᾽ οἶομαι μέντοι σ᾽ ἀναπείσειν, ὥστε γε
οὐδ᾽ αὐτὸς ἀκροασάμενος οὐδὲν ἀντερεῖς.

Στρεψιάδης
καὶ μὴν ὅ τι καὶ λέξεις ἀκοῦσαι βούλομαι.

Χορός
σὸν ἔργον ὦ πρεσβῦτα φροντίζειν ὅπῃ
τὸν ἄνδρα κρατήσεις,
ὡς οὗτος, εἰ μή τῳ ‘πεποίθειν, οὐκ ἂν ἦν
οὕτως ἀκόλαστος.
ἀλλ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὅτῳ θρασύνεται: δῆλόν γε τἀνθρώπου
‘στὶ τὸ λῆμα.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ὅτου τὸ πρῶτον ἤρξαθ᾽ ἡ μάχη γενέσθαι,
ἤδη λέγειν χρὴ πρὸς χορόν: πάντως δὲ τοῦτο δράσεις.

Στρεψιάδης
καὶ μὴν ὅθεν γε πρῶτον ἠρξάμεσθα λοιδορεῖσθαι
ἐγὼ φράσω: ‘πειδὴ γὰρ εἰστιώμεθ᾽, ὥσπερ ἴστε,
πρῶτον μὲν αὐτὸν τὴν λύραν λαβόντ᾽ ἐγὼ ‘κέλευσα
ᾆσαι Σιμωνίδου μέλος, τὸν Κριὸν ὡς ἐπέχθη.
ὁ δ᾽ εὐθέως ἀρχαῖον εἶν᾽ ἔφασκε τὸ κιθαρίζειν
ᾄδειν τε πίνονθ᾽ ὥσπερεὶ κάχρυς γυναῖκ᾽ ἀλοῦσαν.

Φειδιππίδης
οὐ γὰρ τότ᾽εὐθὺς χρῆν σ᾽ἄρα τύπτεσθαί τε καὶ πατεῖσθαι,
ᾄδειν κελεύονθ᾽ὡσπερεὶ τέττιγας ἑστιῶντα;

Στρεψιάδης
τοιαῦτα μέντοι καὶ τότ᾽ἔλεγεν ἔνδον οἷάπερ νῦν,
καὶ τὸν Σιμωνίδην ἔφασκ᾽εἶναι κακὸν ποιητήν.
κἀγὼ μόλις μὲν ἀλλ᾽ὅμως ἠνεσχόμην τὸ πρῶτον:
ἔπειτα δ᾽ἐκέλευσ᾽αὐτὸν ἀλλὰ μυρρίνην λαβόντα
τῶν Αἰσχύλου λέξαι τί μοι: κᾆθ᾽οὗτος εὐθὺς εἶπεν:
‘ἐγὼ γὰρ Αἰσχύλον νομίζω πρῶτον ἐν ποιηταῖς,
ψόφου πλέων ἀξύστατον στόμφακα κρημνοποιόν;’
κἀνταῦθα πῶς οἴεσθέ μου τὴν καρδίαν ὀρεχθεῖν;
ὅμως δὲ τὸν θυμὸν δακὼν ἔφην, ‘σὺ δ᾽ἀλλὰ τούτων
λέξον τι τῶν νεωτέρων, ἅττ᾽ἐστὶ τὰ σοφὰ ταῦτα.’
ὁ δ᾽εὐθὺς ᾔσ᾽Εὐριπίδου ῥῆσίν τιν᾽, ὡς ἐκίνει
ἀδελφὸς ὢλεξίκακε τὴν ὁμομητρίαν ἀδελφήν.
κἀγὼ οὐκέτ᾽ἐξηνεσχόμην, ἀλλ᾽εὐθέως ἀράττω
πολλοῖς κακοῖς καἰσχροῖσι: κᾆτ᾽ἐντεῦθεν, οἷον εἰκός,
ἔπος πρὸς ἔπος ἠρειδόμεσθ᾽: εἶθ᾽οὗτος ἐπαναπηδᾶ,
κἄπειτ᾽ἔφλα με κἀσπόδει κἄπνιγε κἀπέθλιβεν.

Φειδιππίδης
οὔκουν δικαίως, ὅστις οὐκ Εὐριπίδην ἐπαινεῖς
σοφώτατον;

Στρεψιάδης
σοφώτατόν γ᾽ἐκεῖνον:ὦ — τί σ᾽εἴπω;
ἀλλ᾽αὖθις αὖ τυπτήσομαι.

Φειδιππίδης
νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ἐν δίκῃ γ᾽ἄν.

Στρεψιάδης
καὶ πῶς δικαίως; ὅστις ὦ ‘ναίσχυντέ σ᾽ἐξέθρεψα,
αἰσθανόμενός σου πάντα τραυλίζοντος, ὅ τι νooίης.
εἰ μέν γε βρῦν εἴποις, ἐγὼ γνοὺς ἂν πιεῖν ἐπέσχον:

μαμμᾶν δ’ἂν αἰτήσαντος ἦκόν σοι φέρων ἂν ἄρτον:
κακκᾶν δ’ἂν οὐκ ἔφθης φράσας, κἀγὼ λαβὼν θύραζε
ἐξέφερον ἂν καὶ προὐσχόμην σε: σὺ δ’ἐμὲ νῦν ἀπάγχων
βοῶντα καὶ κεκραγόθ’ὅτι
χεζητιῴην, οὐκ ἔτλης
ἔξω ‘ξενεγκεῖν ὦ μιαρὲ
θύραζέ μ’, ἀλλὰ πνιγόμενος
αὐτοῦ ‘ποίησα κακκᾶν.

Χορός
οἶμαί γε τῶν νεωτέρων τὰς καρδίας
πηδᾶν ὅ τι λέξει.
εἰ γὰρ τοιαῦτά γ’οὗτος ἐξειργασμένος
λαλῶν ἀναπείσει,
τὸ δέρμα τῶν γεραιτέρων λάβοιμεν ἂν
ἀλλ’οὐδ’ἐρεβίνθου.
σὸν ἔργον ὦ καινῶν ἐπῶν κινητὰ καὶ μοχλευτὰ
πειθώ τινα ζητεῖν, ὅπως δόξεις λέγειν δίκαια.

Φειδιππίδης
ὡς ἡδὺ καινοῖς πράγμασιν καὶ δεξιοῖς ὁμιλεῖν,
καὶ τῶν καθεστώτων νόμων ὑπερφρονεῖν δύνασθαι.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ὅτε μὲν ἱππικῇ τὸν νοῦν μόνῃ προσεῖχον,
οὐδ’ἂν τρί’εἰπεῖν ῥήμαθ’οἷός τ’ἦν πρὶν ἐξαμαρτεῖν:
νυνὶ δ’ἐπειδή μ’οὑτοσὶ τούτων ἔπαυσεν αὐτός,
γνώμαις δὲ λεπταῖς καὶ λόγοις ξύνειμι καὶ μερίμναις,
οἶμαι διδάξειν ὡς δίκαιον τὸν πατέρα κολάζειν.

Στρεψιάδης
ἵππευε τοίνυν νὴ Δί’, ὡς ἔμοιγε κρεῖττόν ἐστιν
ἵππων τρέφειν τέθριππον ἢ τυπτόμενον ἐπιτριβῆναι.

Φειδιππίδης
ἐκεῖσε δ’ὅθεν ἀπέσχισάς με τοῦ λόγου μέτειμι,
καὶ πρῶτ’ἐρήσομαί σε τουτί: παῖδά μ’ὄντ’ἔτυπτες;

Στρεψιάδης

ἔγωγέ σ᾽εὐνοῶν τε καὶ κηδόμενος.

Φειδιππίδης
εἰπὲ δή μοι,
οὐ κἀμέ σοι δίκαιόν ἐστιν εὐνοεῖν ὁμοίως
τύπτειν τ᾽, ἐπειδήπερ γε τοῦτ᾽ἐστ᾽εὐνοεῖν τὸ τύπτειν;
πῶς γὰρ τὸ μὲν σὸν σῶμα χρὴ πληγῶν ἀθῷον εἶναι,
τοὐμὸν δὲ μή; καὶ μὴν ἔφυν ἐλεύθερός γε κἀγώ.
κλάουσι παῖδες, πατέρα δ᾽οὐ κλάειν δοκεῖς; ...
φήσεις νομίζεσθαι σὺ παιδὸς τοῦτο τοὔργον εἶναι:
ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ἀντείποιμ᾽ἂν ὡς δὶς παῖδες οἱ γέροντες:
εἰκὸς δὲ μᾶλλον τοὺς γέροντας ἢ νέους τι κλάειν,
ὅσῳπερ ἐξαμαρτάνειν ἧττον δίκαιον αὐτούς.

Στρεψιάδης
ἀλλ᾽οὐδαμοῦ νομίζεται τὸν πατέρα τοῦτο πάσχειν.

Φειδιππίδης
οὔκουν ἀνὴρ ὁ τὸν νόμον θεὶς τοῦτον ἦν τὸ πρῶτον
ὥσπερ σὺ κἀγώ, καὶ λέγων ἔπειθε τοὺς παλαιούς;
ἧττόν τι δῆτ᾽ἔξεστι κἀμοὶ καινὸν αὖ τὸ λοιπὸν
θεῖναι νόμον τοῖς υἱέσιν, τοὺς πατέρας ἀντιτύπτειν;
ὅσας δὲ πληγὰς εἴχομεν πρὶν τὸν νόμον τεθῆναι,
ἀφίεμεν, καὶ δίδομεν αὐτοῖς προῖκα συγκεκόφθαι.
σκέψαι δὲ τοὺς ἀλεκτρυόνας καὶ τἄλλα τὰ βοτὰ ταυτί,
ὡς τοὺς πατέρας ἀμύνεται: καίτοι τί διαφέρουσιν
ἡμῶν ἐκεῖνοι, πλήν γ᾽ὅτι ψηφίσματ᾽οὐ γράφουσιν;

Στρεψιάδης
τί δῆτ᾽, ἐπειδὴ τοὺς ἀλεκτρυόνας ἅπαντα μιμεῖ,
οὐκ ἐσθίεις καὶ τὴν κόπρον κἀπὶ ξύλου καθεύδεις;

Φειδιππίδης
οὐ ταὐτὸν ᾧ τᾶν ἐστίν, οὐδ᾽ἂν Σωκράτει δοκοίη.

Στρεψιάδης
πρὸς ταῦτα μὴ τύπτ᾽: εἰ δὲ μή, σαυτόν ποτ᾽αἰτιάσει.

Φειδιππίδης

καὶ πῶς;

Στρεψιάδης
ἐπεὶ σὲ μὲν δίκαιός εἰμ’ἐγὼ κολάζειν,
σὺ δ’, ἢν γένηταί σοι, τὸν υἱόν.

Φειδιππίδης
ἢν δὲ μὴ γένηται,
μάτην ἐμοὶ κεκλαύσεται, σὺ δ’ἐγχανὼν τεθνήξεις.

Στρεψιάδης
ἐμοὶ μὲν ὦνδρες ἥλικες δοκεῖ λέγειν δίκαια:
κἄμοιγε συγχωρεῖν δοκεῖ τούτοισι τἀπιεικῆ.
κλάειν γὰρ ἡμᾶς εἰκός ἐστ’, ἢν μὴ δίκαια δρῶμεν.

Φειδιππίδης
σκέψαι δὲ χἀτέραν ἔτι γνώμην.

Στρεψιάδης
ἀπὸ γὰρ

Φειδιππίδης
καὶ μὴν ἴσως γ’οὐκ ἀχθέσει παθὼν ἃ νῦν πέπονθας.

Στρεψιάδης
πῶς δή; δίδαξον γὰρ τί μ’ἐκ τούτων ἐπωφελήσεις.

Φειδιππίδης
τὴν μητέρ’ὥσπερ καὶ σὲ τυπτήσω.

Στρεψιάδης
τί φῄς, τί φῂς σύ;
τοῦθ’ἕτερον αὖ μεῖζον κακόν.

Φειδιππίδης
τί δ’ἢν ἔχων τὸν ἥττω
λόγον σε νικήσω λέγων
τὴν μητέρ’ὡς τύπτειν χρεών;

Στρεψιάδης

τί δ᾽ἄλλο γ᾽ἢν ταυτὶ ποιῇς,
οὐδέν σε κωλύσει σεαυτὸν
ἐμβαλεῖν ἐς τὸ βάραθρον
μετὰ Σωκράτους 1450
καὶ τὸν λόγον τὸν ἥττω.
ταυτὶ δι᾽ὑμᾶς ὦ Νεθέλαι πέπονθ᾽ἐγώ,
ὑμῖν ἀναθεὶς ἅπαντα τἀμὰ πράγματα.

Χορός
αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν σαυτῷ σὺ τούτων αἴτιος,
στρέψας σεαυτὸν ἐς πονηρὰ πράγματα.1455

Στρεψιάδης
τί δῆτα ταῦτ᾽οὔ μοι τότ᾽ἠγορεύετε,
ἀλλ᾽ἄνδρ᾽ἄγροικον καὶ γέροντ᾽ἐπῄρετε;

Χορός
ἡμεῖς ποιοῦμεν ταῦθ᾽ἑκάστοθ᾽ὅταν τινὰ
γνῶμεν πονηρῶν ὄντ᾽ἐραστὴν πραγμάτων,
ἕως ἂν αὐτὸν ἐμβάλωμεν ἐς κακόν, 1460
ὅπως ἂν εἰδῇ τοὺς θεοὺς δεδοικέναι.

Στρεψιάδης
ὤμοι πονηρά γ᾽ὦ Νεφέλαι, δίκαια δέ.
οὐ γάρ μ᾽ἐχρῆν τὰ χρήμαθ᾽ἁδανεισάμην
ἀποστερεῖν. νῦν οὖν ὅπως ὦ φίλτατε
τὸν Χαιρεφῶντα τὸν μιαρὸν καὶ Σωκράτη 1465
ἀπολεῖς μετ᾽ἐμοῦ ‘λθών, οἳ σὲ κἄμ᾽ἐξηπάτων.

Φειδιππίδης
ἀλλ᾽οὐκ ἂν ἀδικήσαιμι τοὺς διδασκάλους.

Στρεψιάδης
ναὶ ναὶ καταιδέσθητι πατρῷον Δία.

Φειδιππίδης
ἰδού γε Δία πατρῷον: ὡς ἀρχαῖος εἶ.

Ζεὺς γάρ τις ἔστιν;

Στρεψιάδης
ἔστιν.

Φειδιππίδης
οὐκ ἔστ᾽, οὔκ, ἐπεὶ
Δῖνος βασιλεύει τὸν Δῖ ἐξεληλακώς.

Στρεψιάδης
οὐκ ἐξελήλακ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ἐγὼ τοῦτ᾽ᾠόμην
διὰ τουτονὶ τὸν δῖνον. οἴμοι δείλαιος
ὅτε καὶ σὲ χυτρεοῦν ὄντα θεὸν ἡγησάμην.

Φειδιππίδης
ἐνταῦθα σαυτῷ παραφρόνει καὶ φληνάφα.

Στρεψιάδης
οἴμοι παρανοίας: ὡς ἐμαινόμην ἄρα,
ὅτ᾽ἐξέβαλλον τοὺς θεοὺς διὰ Σωκράτη.
ἀλλ᾽ὦ φίλ᾽Ἑρμῆ μηδαμῶς θύμαινέ μοι
μηδέ μ᾽ἐπιτρίψῃς, ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην ἔχε
ἐμοῦ παρανοήσαντος ἀδολεσχίᾳ:
καί μοι γενοῦ ξύμβουλος, εἴτ᾽αὐτοὺς γραφὴν
διωκάθω γραψάμενος εἴθ᾽ὅ τι σοι δοκεῖ.
ὀρθῶς παραινεῖς οὐκ ἐῶν δικορραφεῖν,
ἀλλ᾽ὡς τάχιστ᾽ἐμπιμπράναι τὴν οἰκίαν
τῶν ἀδολεσχῶν. δεῦρο δεῦρ᾽ὦ Ξανθία,
κλίμακα λαβὼν ἔξελθε καὶ σμινύην φέρων,
κἄπειτ᾽ἐπαναβὰς ἐπὶ τὸ φροντιστήριον
τὸ τέγος κατάσκαπτ᾽, εἰ φιλεῖς τὸν δεσπότην,
ἕως ἂν αὐτοῖς ἐμβάλῃς τὴν οἰκίαν:
ἐμοὶ δὲ δᾷδ᾽ἐνεγκάτω τις ἡμμένην,
κἀγώ τιν᾽αὐτῶν τήμερον δοῦναι δίκην
ἐμοὶ ποιήσω, κεἰ σφόδρ᾽εἴσ᾽ἀλαζόνες.

Μαθητής Α
ἰοὺ ἰού.

Στρεψιάδης
σὸν ἔργον ὦ δᾲς ἰέναι πολλὴν φλόγα.

Μαθητής Α
ἄνθρωπε, τί ποιεῖς;

Στρεψιάδης
ὅ τι ποιῶ; τί δ᾽ἄλλο γ᾽ἢ
διαλεπτολογοῦμαι ταῖς δοκοῖς τῆς οἰκίας;

Μαθητής Β
οἴμοι τίς ἡμῶν πυρπολεῖ τὴν οἰκίαν;

Στρεψιάδης
ἐκεῖνος οὗπερ θοἰμάτιον εἰλήφατε.

Μαθητής Γ
ἀπολεῖς ἀπολεῖς.

Στρεψιάδης
τοῦτ᾽αὐτὸ γὰρ καὶ βούλομαι,
ἢν ἡ σμινύη μοι μὴ προδῷ τὰς ἐλπίδας,
ἢ ‘γὼ πρότερόν πως ἐκτραχηλισθῶ πεσών.

Σωκράτης
οὗτος τί ποιεῖς ἐτεὸν οὐπὶ τοῦ τέγους;

Στρεψιάδης
ἀεροβατῶ καὶ περιφρονῶ τὸν ἥλιον.

Σωκράτης
οἴμοι τάλας δείλαιος ἀποπνιγήσομαι.

Χαιρεφῶν
ἐγὼ δὲ κακοδαίμων γε κατακαυθήσομαι.

Στρεψιάδης
τί γὰρ μαθόντες τοὺς θεοὺς ὑβρίζετε,
καὶ τῆς σελήνης ἐσκοπεῖσθε τὴν ἕδραν;

Ερμῆς
δίωκε βάλλε παῖε, πολλῶν οὕνεκα,
μάλιστα δ’εἰδὼς τοὺς θεοὺς ὡς ἠδίκουν.

Χορός
ἡγεῖσθ’ἔξω: κεχόρευται γὰρ μετρίως τό γε τήμερον ἡμῖν. 1510

THE WASPS

Σωσίας

Οὗτος τί πάσχεις ὦ κακόδαιμον Ξανθία;

Ξανθίας

φυλακὴν καταλύειν νυκτερινὴν διδάσκομαι.

Σωσίας

κακὸν ἆρα ταῖς πλευραῖς τι προὐφείλεις μέγα.
ἆρ᾽ οἶσθά γ᾽ οἷον κνώδαλον φυλάττομεν;

Ξανθίας

οἶδ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπιθυμῶ σμικρὸν ἀπομερμηρίσαι.

Σωσίας

σὺ δ᾽ οὖν παρακινδύνευ᾽, ἐπεὶ καὐτοῦ γ᾽ ἐμοῦ
κατὰ τοῖν κόραιν ὕπνου τι καταχεῖται γλυκύ.

Ξανθίας

ἀλλ᾽ ἦ παραφρονεῖς ἐτεὸν ἢ κορυβαντιᾷς;

Σωσίας

οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ ὕπνος μ᾽ ἔχει τις ἐκ Σαβαζίου.

Ξανθίας

τὸν αὐτὸν ἄρ᾽ ἐμοὶ βουκολεῖς Σαβάζιον.
κἀμοὶ γὰρ ἀρτίως ἐπεστρατεύσατο
Μῆδός τις ἐπὶ τὰ βλέφαρα νυστακτὴς ὕπνος:
καὶ δῆτ᾽ ὄναρ θαυμαστὸν εἶδον ἀρτίως.

Σωσίας

κἄγωγ᾽ ἀληθῶς οἷον οὐδεπώποτε.
ἀτὰρ σὺ λέξον πρότερος.

Ξανθίας
ἐδόκουν αἰετὸν
καταπτόμενον ἐς τὴν ἀγορὰν μέγαν πάνυ
ἀναρπάσαντα τοῖς ὄνυξιν ἀσπίδα
φέρειν ἐπίχαλκον ἀνεκὰς ἐς τὸν οὐρανόν,
κἄπειτα ταύτην ἀποβαλεῖν Κλεώνυμον.

Σωσίας

οὐδὲν ἄρα γρίφου διαφέρει Κλεώνυμος.

Ξανθίας

πῶς δή;

Σωσίας
προσερεῖ τις τοῖσι συμπόταις, λέγων
‘τί ταὐτὸν ἐν γῇ τ᾽ ἀπέβαλεν κἀν οὐρανῷ
κἀν τῇ θαλάττῃ θηρίον τὴν ἀσπίδα;’

Ξανθίας

οἴμοι τί δῆτά μοι κακὸν γενήσεται
ἰδόντι τοιοῦτον ἐνύπνιον;

Σωσίας
μὴ φροντίσῃς.
οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔσται δεινὸν οὐ μὰ τοὺς θεούς.

Ξανθίας

δεινόν γέ ποὔστ᾽ ἄνθρωπος ἀποβαλὼν ὅπλα.
ἀτὰρ σὺ τὸ σὸν αὖ λέξον.

Σωσίας

ἀλλ᾽ ἐστὶν μέγα.
περὶ τῆς πόλεως γάρ ἐστι τοῦ σκάφους ὅλου.

Ξανθίας

λέγε νυν ἀνύσας τι τὴν τρόπιν τοῦ πράγματος.

Σωσίας

ἔδοξέ μοι περὶ πρῶτον ὕπνον ἐν τῇ πυκνὶ
ἐκκλησιάζειν πρόβατα συγκαθήμενα,
βακτηρίας ἔχοντα καὶ τριβώνια:
κἄπειτα τούτοις τοῖς προβάτοισι μοὐδόκει
δημηγορεῖν φάλαινα πανδοκεύτρια,
ἔχουσα φωνὴν ἐμπεπρησμένης ὑός.

Ξανθίας

αἰβοῖ.

Σωσίας
τί ἔστι;

Ξανθίας
παῦε παῦε, μὴ λέγε:
ὄζει κάκιστον τοὐνύπνιον βύρσης σαπρᾶς.

Σωσίας

εἶθ᾽ ἡ μιαρὰ φάλαιν᾽ ἔχουσα τρυτάνην
ἵστη βόειον δημόν.

Ξανθίας
οἴμοι δείλαιος:
τὸν δῆμον ἡμῶν βούλεται διιστάναι.

Σωσίας

ἐδόκει δέ μοι Θέωρος αὐτῆς πλησίον
χαμαὶ καθῆσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν κόρακος ἔχων.

εἶτ᾽ Ἀλκιβιάδης εἶπε πρός με τραυλίσας,
‘ὁλᾷς; Θέωλος τὴν κεφαλὴν κόλακος ἔχει.’

Ξανθία

ὀρθῶς γε τοῦτ᾽ Ἀλκιβιάδης ἐτραύλισεν.

Σωσία

οὔκουν ἐκεῖν᾽ ἀλλόκοτον, ὁ Θέωρος κόραξ
γιγνόμενος;

Ξανθία
ἥκιστ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἄριστον.

Σωσία
πῶς;

Ξανθία
ὅπως;
ἄνθρωπος ὢν εἶτ᾽ ἐγένετ᾽ ἐξαίφνης κόραξ:
οὔκουν ἐναργὲς τοῦτο συμβαλεῖν, ὅτι
ἀρθεὶς ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν ἐς κόρακας οἰχήσεται; **Σωσία**

εἶτ᾽ οὐκ ἐγὼ δοὺς δύ᾽ ὀβολὼ μισθώσομαι
οὕτως ὑποκρινόμενον σοφῶς ὀνείρατα;

Ξανθία

φέρε νυν κατείπω τοῖς θεαταῖς τὸν λόγον,
ὀλίγ᾽ ἄτθ᾽ ὑπειπὼν πρῶτον αὐτοῖσιν ταδί,
μηδὲν παρ᾽ ἡμῶν προσδοκᾶν λίαν μέγα,
μηδ᾽ αὖ γέλωτα Μεγαρόθεν κεκλεμμένον.
ἡμῖν γὰρ οὐκ ἔστ᾽ οὔτε κάρυ᾽ ἐκ φορμίδος
δούλω διαρριπτοῦντε τοῖς θεωμένοις,
οὔθ᾽ Ἡρακλῆς τὸ δεῖπνον ἐξαπατώμενος,
οὐδ᾽ αὖθις ἀνασελγαινόμενος Εὐριπίδης:
οὐδ᾽ εἰ Κλέων γ᾽ ἔλαμψε τῆς τύχης χάριν,
αὖθις τὸν αὐτὸν ἄνδρα μυττωτεύσομεν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἔστιν ἡμῖν λογίδιον γνώμην ἔχον,

ὑμῶν μὲν αὐτῶν οὐχὶ δεξιώτερον,
κωμῳδίας δὲ φορτικῆς σοφώτερον.
ἔστιν γὰρ ἡμῖν δεσπότης ἐκεινοσὶ
ἄνω καθεύδων, ὁ μέγας, οὐπὶ τοῦ τέγους.
οὗτος φυλάττειν τὸν πατέρ᾽ ἐπέταξε νῷν,
ἔνδον καθείρξας, ἵνα θύραζε μὴ ‘ξίῃ.
νόσον γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ἀλλόκοτον αὐτοῦ νοσεῖ,
ἣν οὐδ᾽ ἂν εἷς γνοίη ποτ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἂν ξυμβάλοι
εἰ μὴ πύθοιθ᾽ ἡμῶν: ἐπεὶ τοπάζετε.
Ἀμυνίας μὲν ὁ Προνάπους φήσ᾽ οὑτοσὶ
εἶναι φιλόκυβον αὐτόν: ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν λέγει.

Σωσίας

μὰ Δί᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἀφ᾽ αὐτοῦ τὴν νόσον τεκμαίρεται.

Ξανθίας

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ ‘φιλο᾽ μέν ἐστιν ἀρχὴ τοῦ κακοῦ.
ὁδὶ δέ φησι Σωσίας πρὸς Δερκύλον
εἶναι φιλοπότην αὐτόν.

Σωσίας
οὐδαμῶς γ᾽, ἐπεὶ
αὕτη γε χρηστῶν ἐστιν ἀνδρῶν ἡ νόσος.

Ξανθίας

Νικόστρατος δ᾽ αὖ φησιν ὁ Σκαμβωνίδης
εἶναι φιλοθύτην αὐτὸν ἢ φιλόξενον.

Σωσίας

μὰ τὸν κύν᾽ ὦ Νικόστρατ᾽ οὐ φιλόξενος,
ἐπεὶ καταπύγων ἐστὶν ὅ γε Φιλόξενος.

Ξανθίας

ἄλλως φλυαρεῖτ᾽: οὐ γὰρ ἐξευρήσετε.
εἰ δὴ ‘πιθυμεῖτ᾽ εἰδέναι, σιγᾶτε νῦν.

φράσω γὰρ ἤδη τὴν νόσον τοῦ δεσπότου.
φιληλιαστής ἐστιν ὡς οὐδεὶς ἀνήρ,
ἐρᾷ τε τούτου, τοῦ δικάζειν, καὶ στένει
ἢν μὴ ‘πὶ τοῦ πρώτου καθίζηται ξύλου.
ὕπνου δ᾽ ὁρᾷ τῆς νυκτὸς οὐδὲ πασπάλην.
ἢν δ᾽ οὖν καταμύσῃ κἂν ἄχνην, ὅμως ἐκεῖ
ὁ νοῦς πέτεται τὴν νύκτα περὶ τὴν κλεψύδραν.
ὑπὸ τοῦ δὲ τὴν ψῆφόν γ᾽ ἔχειν εἰωθέναι
τοὺς τρεῖς ξυνέχων τῶν δακτύλων ἀνίσταται,
ὥσπερ λιβανωτὸν ἐπιτιθεὶς νουμηνίᾳ.
καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ ἦν ἴδῃ γέ που γεγραμμένον
υἱὸν Πυριλάμπους ἐν θύρᾳ Δῆμον καλόν,
ἰὼν παρέγραψε πλησίον ‘κημὸς καλός.’
τὸν ἀλεκτρυόνα δ᾽, ὃς ᾖδ᾽ ἀφ᾽ ἑσπέρας, ἔφη
ὄψ᾽ ἐξεγείρειν αὐτὸν ἀναπεπεισμένον,
παρὰ τῶν ὑπευθύνων ἔχοντα χρήματα.
εὐθὺς δ᾽ ἀπὸ δορπηστοῦ κέκραγεν ἐμβάδας,
κἄπειτ᾽ ἐκεῖσ᾽ ἐλθὼν προκαθεύδει πρᾲ πάνυ,
ὥσπερ λεπὰς προσεχόμενος τῷ κίονι.
ὑπὸ δυσκολίας δ᾽ ἅπασι τιμῶν τὴν μακρὰν
ὥσπερ μέλιττ᾽ ἢ βομβυλιὸς εἰσέρχεται
ὑπὸ τοῖς ὄνυξι κηρὸν ἀναπεπλασμένος.
ψήφων δὲ δείσας μὴ δεηθείη ποτέ,
ἵν᾽ ἔχοι δικάζειν, αἰγιαλὸν ἔνδον τρέφει.
τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀλύει: νουθετούμενος δ᾽ ἀεὶ
μᾶλλον δικάζει. τοῦτον οὖν φυλάττομεν
μοχλοῖσιν ἐνδήσαντες, ὡς ἂν μὴ ‘ξίῃ.
ὁ γὰρ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ τὴν νόσον βαρέως φέρει.
καὶ πρῶτα μὲν λόγοισι παραμυθούμενος
ἀνέπειθεν αὐτὸν μὴ φορεῖν τριβώνιον
μηδ᾽ ἐξιέναι θύραζ᾽, ὁ δ᾽ οὐκ ἐπείθετο.
εἶτ᾽ αὐτὸν ἀπέλου κἀκάθαιρ᾽, ὁ δ᾽ οὐ μάλα.
μετὰ τοῦτ᾽ ἐκορυβάντιζ᾽, ὁ δ᾽ αὐτῷ τυμπάνῳ
ᾄξας ἐδίκαζεν ἐς τὸ καινὸν ἐμπεσών.
ὅτε δῆτα ταύταις ταῖς τελεταῖς οὐκ ὠφέλει,
διέπλευσεν εἰς Αἴγιναν, εἶτα ξυλλαβὼν
νύκτωρ κατέκλινεν αὐτὸν εἰς Ἀσκληπιοῦ,
ὁ δ᾽ ἀνεφάνη κνεφαῖος ἐπὶ τῇ κιγκλίδι.
ἐντεῦθεν οὐκέτ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐξεφρίεμεν,

ὁ δ᾽ ἐξεδίδρασκε διά τε τῶν ὑδρορροῶν
καὶ τῶν ὀπῶν: ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ὅσ᾽ ἦν τετρημένα
ἐνεβύσαμεν ῥακίοισι κἀπακτώσαμεν,
ὁ δ᾽ ὡσπερεὶ κολοιὸς αὐτῷ παττάλους
ἐνέκρουεν ἐς τὸν τοῖχον, εἶτ᾽ ἐξήλλετο.
ἡμεῖς δὲ τὴν αὐλὴν ἅπασαν δικτύοις
καταπετάσαντες ἐν κύκλῳ φυλάττομεν.
ἔστιν δ᾽ ὄνομα τῷ μὲν γέροντι Φιλοκλέων
ναὶ μὰ Δία, τῷ δ᾽ υἱεῖ γε τῳδὶ Βδελυκλέων,
ἔχων τρόπους φρυαγμοσεμνάκους τίνας. **Βδελυκλέων**

ὦ Ξανθία καὶ Σωσία, καθεύδετε;

Ξανθίας

οἴμοι.

Σωσίας
τί ἔστι;

Ξανθίας
Βδελυκλέων ἀνίσταται.

Βδελυκλέων

οὐ περιδραμεῖται σφῷν ταχέως δεῦρ᾽ ἄτερος;
ὁ γὰρ πατὴρ ἐς τὸν ἰπνὸν εἰσελήλυθε
καὶ μυσπολεῖ τι καταδεδυκώς. ἀλλ᾽ ἄθρει
κατὰ τῆς πυέλου τὸ τρῆμ᾽ ὅπως μὴ ‘κδύσεται:
σὺ δὲ τῇ θύρᾳ πρόσκεισο.

Σωσίας
ταῦτ᾽ ὦ δέσποτα.

Βδελυκλέων

ἄναξ Πόσειδον τί ποτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἡ κάπνη ψοφεῖ;
οὗτος τίς εἶ σύ;

Φιλοκλέων

καπνὸς ἔγωγ᾽ ἐξέρχομαι.

Βδελυκλέων

καπνός; φέρ᾽ ἴδω ξύλου τίνος σύ.

Φιλοκλέων
συκίνου.

Βδελυκλέων

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ὅσπερ γ᾽ ἐστὶ δριμύτατος καπνῶν.
ἀτὰρ οὐκέτ᾽ ἐρρήσεις γε, ποῦ ‘σθ᾽ ἡ τηλία;
δύου πάλιν: φέρ᾽ ἐπαναθῶ σοι καὶ ξύλον.
ἐνταῦθά νυν ζήτει τιν᾽ ἀλλην μηχανήν.
ἀτὰρ ἄθλιός γ᾽ εἶιμ᾽ ὡς ἕτερός γ᾽ οὐδεὶς ἀνήρ,
ὅστις πατρὸς νυνὶ Καπνίου κεκλήσομαι.

Σωσίας

ὅδε τὴν θύραν ὠθεῖ:

Βδελυκλέων
πιέζέ νυν σφόδρα,
εὖ κἀνδρικῶς: κἀγὼ γὰρ ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἔρχομαι.
καὶ τῆς κατακλῆδος ἐπιμελοῦ, καὶ τοῦ μοχλοῦ
φύλατθ᾽ ὅπως μὴ τὴν βάλανον ἐκτρώξεται.

Φιλοκλέων

τί δράσετ᾽; οὐκ ἐκφρήσετ᾽ ὦ μιαρώτατοι
δικάσοντά μ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκφεύξεται Δρακοντίδης;

Βδελυκλέων

σὺ δὲ τοῦτο βαρέως ἂν φέροις;

Φιλοκλέων
ὁ γὰρ θεὸς
μαντευομένῳ μοὔχρησεν ἐν Δελφοῖς ποτέ,

ὅταν τις ἐκφύγῃ μ᾽ ἀποσκλῆναι τότε.

Βδελυκλέων

Ἄπολλον ἀποτρόπαιε τοῦ μαντεύματος.

Φιλοκλέων

ἴθ᾽ ἀντιβολῶ σ᾽ ἔκφρες με, μὴ διαρραγῶ.

Βδελυκλέων

μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ Φιλοκλέων οὐδέποτέ γε.

Φιλοκλέων

διατρώξομαι τοίνυν ὀδὰξ τὸ δίκτυον.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔχεις ὀδόντας.

Φιλοκλέων
οἴμοι δείλαιος:
τῶς ἄν σ᾽ ἀποκτείναιμι; πῶς; δότε μοι ξίφος
ὅπως τάχιστ᾽, ἢ πινάκιον τιμητικόν.

Βδελυκλέων

ἄνθρωπος οὗτος μέγα τι δρασείει κακόν.

Φιλοκλέων

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἀποδόσθαι βούλομαι
τὸν ὄνον ἄγων αὐτοῖσι τοῖς κανθηλίοις:
νουμηνία γάρ ἐστιν.

Βδελυκλέων
οὔκουν κἂν ἐγὼ
αὐτὸν ἀποδοίμην δῆτ᾽ ἄν; **Φιλοκλέων**

οὐχ ὥσπερ γ᾽ ἐγώ.

Βδελυκλέων

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἄμεινον.

Φιλοκλέων
ἀλλὰ τὸν ὄνον ἔξαγε.

Σωσίας

οἵαν πρόφασιν καθῆκεν, ὡς εἰρωνικῶς,
ἵν᾽ αὐτὸν ἐκπέμψειας.

Βδελυκλέων
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔσπασεν
ταύτῃ γ᾽: ἐγὼ γὰρ ᾐσθόμην τεχνωμένου.
ἀλλ᾽ εἰσιών μοι τὸν ὄνον ἐξάγειν δοκῶ
ὅπως ἂν ὁ γέρων μηδὲ παρακύψῃ πάλιν.
κάνθων τί κλάεις; ὅτι πεπράσει τήμερον;
βάδιζε θᾶττον. τί στένεις, εἰ μὴ φέρεις
Ὀδυσσέα τιν᾽; **Σωσίας**
ἀλλὰ ναὶ μὰ Δία φέρει
κάτω γε τουτονί τιν᾽ ὑποδεδυκότα.

Βδελυκλέων

ποῖον; φέρ᾽ ἴδωμαι τουτονί. τουτὶ τί ἦν;
τίς εἶ ποτ᾽ ὦνθρωπ᾽ ἐτεόν;

Φιλοκλέων
Οὖτις νὴ Δία.

Βδελυκλέων

Οὖτις σύ; ποδαπός;

Φιλοκλέων
Ἴθακος Ἀποδρασιππίδου.

Βδελυκλέων

Οὖτις μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὔτι χαιρήσων γε σύ.
ὕφελκε θᾶττον αὐτόν. ὦ μιαρώτατος
ἵν᾽ ὑποδέδυκεν: ὥστ᾽ ἔμοιγ᾽ ἰνδάλλεται
ὁμοιότατος κλητῆρος εἶναι πωλίῳ.

Φιλοκλέων

εἰ μή μ᾽ ἐάσεθ᾽ ἥσυχον, μαχούμεθα.

Βδελυκλέων

περὶ τοῦ μαχεῖ νῷν δῆτα;

Φιλοκλέων
περὶ ὄνου σκιᾶς.

Βδελυκλέων

πονηρὸς εἶ πόρρω τέχνης καὶ παράβολος.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐγὼ πονηρός; οὐ μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ οἶσθα σὺ
νῦν μ᾽ ὄντ᾽ ἄριστον: ἀλλ᾽ ἴσως, ὅταν φάγῃς
ὑπογάστριον γέροντος ἡλιαστικοῦ.

Βδελυκλέων

ὄθει τὸν ὄνον καὶ σαυτὸν ἐς τὴν οἰκίαν.

Φιλοκλέων

ὦ ξυνδικασταὶ καὶ Κλέων ἀμύνατε.

Βδελυκλέων

ἔνδον κέκραχθι τῆς θύρας κεκλῃμένης.
ὄθει σὺ πολλοὺς τῶν λίθων πρὸς τὴν θύραν,

καὶ τὴν βάλανον ἔμβαλλε πάλιν ἐς τὸν μοχλόν,
καὶ τῇ δοκῷ προσθεὶς τὸν ὅλμον τὸν μέγαν
ἀνύσας τι προσκύλισον.

Σωσίας
οἴμοι δείλαιος:
πόθεν ποτ᾽ ἐμπέπτωκέ μοι τὸ βωλίον; **Βδελυκλέων**

ἴσως ἄνωθεν μῦς ἐνέβαλέ σοί ποθεν.

Σωσίας

μῦς; οὐ μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ὑποδυόμενός τις οὑτοσὶ
ὑπὸ τῶν κεραμίδων ἡλιαστὴς ὀροφίας.

Βδελυκλέων

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, στροῦθος ἀνὴρ γίγνεται:
ἐκπτήσεται. ποῦ ποῦ ‘στί μοι τὸ δίκτυον;
σοῦ σοῦ, πάλιν σοῦ. νὴ Δί᾽ ἦ μοι κρεῖττον ἦν
τηρεῖν Σκιώνην ἀντὶ τούτου τοῦ πατρός.

Σωσίας

ἄγε νυν, ἐπειδὴ τουτονὶ σεσοβήκαμεν,
κοὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως διαδὺς ἂν ἡμᾶς ἔτι λάθοι,
τί οὐκ ἀπεκοιμήθημεν ὅσον ὅσον στίλην; **Βδελυκλέων**

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ πόνηρ᾽ ἥξουσιν ὀλίγον ὕστερον
οἱ ξυνδικασταὶ παρακαλοῦντες τουτονὶ
τὸν πατέρα.

Σωσίας
τίλέγεις; ἀλλὰ νῦν γ᾽ ὄρθρος βαθύς.

Βδελυκλέων

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽, ὀψὲ γοῦν ἀνεστήκασι νῦν.
ὡς ἀπὸ μέσων νυκτῶν γε παρακαλοῦσ᾽ ἀεί,
λύχνους ἔχοντες καὶ μινυρίζοντες μέλη

ἀρχαῖα μελισιδωνοφρυνιχήρατα,
οἷς ἐκκαλοῦνται τοῦτον.

Σωσίας
οὐκοῦν, ἢν δέῃ,
ἤδη ποτ᾽ αὐτοὺς τοῖς λίθοις βαλλήσομεν.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ πόνηρε τὸ γένος ἤν τις ὀργίσῃ
τὸ τῶν γερόντων, ἔσθ᾽ ὅμοιον σφηκιᾷ.
ἔχουσι γὰρ καὶ κέντρον ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος
ὀξύτατον, ᾧ κεντοῦσι, καὶ κεκραγότες
πηδῶσι καὶ βάλλουσιν ὥσπερ φέψαλοι.

Σωσίας

μὴ φροντίσῃς: ἐὰν ἐγὼ λίθους ἔχω,
πολλῶν δικαστῶν σφηκιὰν διασκεδῶ.

Χορός

χώρει πρόβαιν᾽ ἐρρωμένως. ὦ Κωμία βραδύνεις.
μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ μέντοι πρὸ τοῦ γ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἦσθ᾽ ἱμὰς κύνειος:
νυνὶ δὲ κρείττων ἐστί σου Χαρινάδης βαδίζειν.
ὦ Στρυμόδωρε Κονθυλεῦ, βέλτιστε συνδικαστῶν,
Εὐεργίδης ἆρ᾽ ἐστί που ‘νταῦθ᾽ ἢ Χάβης ὁ Φλυεύς;
πάρεσθ᾽ ὃ δὴ λοιπόν γ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἐστίν, ἀππαπαῖ παπαιάξ,
ἦβης ἐκείνης ἡνίκ᾽ ἐν Βυζαντίῳ ξυνῆμεν
φρουροῦντ᾽ ἐγώ τε καὶ σύ: κᾆτα περιπατοῦντε νύκτωρ
τῆς ἀρτοπώλιδος λαθόντ᾽ ἐκλέψαμεν τὸν ὅλμον,
κᾆθ᾽ ἥψομεν τοῦ κορκόρου κατασχίσαντες αὐτόν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐγκονῶμεν ὦνδρες, ὡς ἔσται Λάχητι νυνί:
σίμβλον δέ φασι χρημάτων ἔχειν ἅπαντες αὐτόν.
χθὲς οὖν Κλέων ὁ κηδεμὼν ἡμῖν ἐφεῖτ᾽ ἐν ὥρᾳ
ἥκειν ἔχοντας ἡμερῶν ὀργὴν τριῶν πονηρὰν
ἐπ᾽ αὐτόν, ὡς κολωμένους ὧν ἠδίκησεν. ἀλλὰ
σπεύδωμεν ὦνδρες ἥλικες πρὶν ἡμέραν γενέσθαι.
χωρῶμεν ἅμα τε τῷ λύχνῳ πάντῃ διασκοπῶμεν,

μή που λίθος τις ἐμποδὼν ἡμᾶς κακόν τι δράσῃ.

Παίς

τὸν πηλὸν ὦ πάτερ πάτερ τουτονὶ φύλαξαι.

Χορός

κάρφος χαμᾶθέν νυν λαβὼν τὸν λύχνον πρόμυξον.

Παίς

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τῳδί μοι δοκῶ τὸν λύχνον προβύσειν.

Χορός

τί δὴ μαθὼν τῷ δακτύλῳ τὴν θρυαλλίδ᾽ ὠθεῖς,
καὶ ταῦτα τοὐλαίου σπανίζοντος ὦνόητε;
οὐ γὰρ δάκνει σ᾽, ὅταν δέῃ τίμιον πρίασθαι.

Παίς

εἰ νὴ Δί᾽ αὖθις κονδύλοις νουθετήσεθ᾽ ἡμᾶς,
ἀποσβέσαντες τοὺς λύχνους ἄπιμεν οἴκαδ᾽ αὐτοί:
κἄπειτ᾽ ἴσως ἐν τῷ σκότῳ τουτουὶ στερηθεὶς
τὸν πηλὸν ὥσπερ ἀτταγᾶς τυρβάσεις βαδίζων.

Χορός

ἦ μὴν ἐγὼ σοῦ χἀτέρους μείζονας κολάζω.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐτοσί μοι βόρβορος φαίνεται πατοῦντι:
κοὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως οὐχ ἡμερῶν τεττάρων τὸ πλεῖστον
ὕδωρ ἀναγκαίως ἔχει τὸν θεὸν ποιῆσαι.
ἔπεισι γοῦν τοῖσιν λύχνοις οὐτοιὶ μύκητες:
φιλεῖ δ᾽, ὅταν τοῦτ᾽ ᾖ, ποιεῖν ὑετὸν μάλιστα.
δεῖται δὲ καὶ τῶν καρπίμων ἄττα μή ‘στι πρῷα
ὕδωρ γενέσθαι κἀπιπνεῦσαι βόρειον αὐτοῖς.
τί χρῆμ᾽ ἄρ᾽ οὐκ τῆς οἰκίας τῆσδε συνδικαστὴς
πέπονθεν, ὡς οὐ φαίνεται δεῦρο πρὸς τὸ πλῆθος;
οὐ μὴν πρὸ τοῦ γ᾽ ἐφολκὸς ἦν, ἀλλὰ πρῶτος ἡμῶν

ἡγεῖτ᾽ ἂν ᾄδων Φρυνίχου: καὶ γάρ ἐστιν ἀνὴρ
φιλῳδός. ἀλλά μοι δοκεῖ στάντας ἐνθάδ᾽ ὦνδρες
ᾄδοντας αὐτὸν ἐκκαλεῖν, ἤν τί πως ἀκούσας
τοὐμοῦ μέλους ὑφ᾽ ἡδονῆς ἐρπύσῃ θύραζε.

Χορός

τί ποτ᾽ οὐ πρὸ θυρῶν φαίνετ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἡμῖν ὁ γέρων οὐδ᾽ ὑπακούει;
μῶν ἀπολώλεκε τὰς
ἐμβάδας, ἢ προσέκοψ᾽ ἐν
τῷ σκότῳ τὸν δάκτυλόν που,
εἶτ᾽ ἐφλέγμηνεν αὐτοῦ
τὸ σφυρὸν γέροντος ὄντος;
καὶ τάχ᾽ ἂν βουβωνιῴη.
ἦ μὴν πολὺ δριμύτατός γ᾽ ἦν τῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν,
καὶ μόνος οὐκ ἂν ἐπείθετ᾽,
ἀλλ᾽ ὁπότ᾽ ἀντιβολοίη
τις, κάτω κύπτων ἂν οὕτω
‘λίθον ἔψεις,’ ἔλεγεν. **Χορός**

τάχα δ᾽ ἂν διὰ τὸν χθιζινὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὃς ἡμᾶς διεδύετ᾽
ἐξαπατῶν καὶ λέγων
ὡς φιλαθήναιος ἦν καὶ
τἀν Σάμῳ πρῶτος κατείποι,
διὰ τοῦτ᾽ ὀδυνηθεὶς
εἶτ᾽ ἴσως κεῖται πυρέττων.
ἔστι γὰρ τοιοῦτος ἀνήρ.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦγάθ᾽ ἀνίστασο μηδ᾽ οὕτω σεαυτὸν
ἔσθιε μηδ᾽ ἀγανάκτει.
καὶ γὰρ ἀνὴρ παχὺς ἥκει
τῶν προδόντων τἀπὶ Θρᾴκης:
ὃν ὅπως ἐγχυτριεῖς.
ὕπαγ᾽ ὦ παῖ ὕπαγε. **Παίς**

ἐθελήσεις τί μοι οὖν ὦ
πάτερ, ἤν σού τι δεηθῶ;

Χορός

πάνυ γ᾽ ὦ παιδίον. ἀλλ᾽ εἰπέ,
τί βούλει με πρίασθαι
καλόν; οἶμαι δέ σ᾽ ἐρεῖν ἀστραγάλους
δήπουθεν ὦ παῖ.

Παίς

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἰσχάδας ὦ παππία:
ἥδιον γάρ.

Χορός
οὐκ ἂν
μὰ Δί᾽, εἰ κρέμαισθέ γ᾽ ὑμεῖς.

Παίς

μὰ Δί᾽ οὔ τἄρα προπέμψω σε τὸ λοιπόν.

Χορός

ἀπὸ γὰρ τοῦδέ με τοῦ μισθαρίου
τρίτον αὐτὸν ἔχειν ἄλφιτα δεῖ καὶ ξύλα κὤψον:
ἢ ἔ. σὺ δὲ σῦκά μ᾽ αἰτεῖς.

Παίς

ἄγε νυν ὦ πάτερ ἢν μὴ
τὸ δικαστήριον ἄρχων
καθίσῃ νῦν, πόθεν ὠνησόμεθ᾽
ἄριστον; ἔχεις ἐλπίδα
χρηστήν τινα νῷν ἢ
πόρον Ἕλλας ἱρὸν εὑρεῖν; **Χορός**

ἀπαπαῖ φεῦ, ἀπαπαῖ φεῦ,
μὰ Δί᾽ οὐκ ἔγωγε νῷν οἶδ᾽
ὁπόθεν γε δεῖπνον ἔσται.

Παίς

τί με δῆτ᾽ ὦ μελέα μῆτερ ἔτικτες;

Χορός

ἵν᾽ ἐμοὶ πράγματα βόσκειν παρέχῃς.

Παίς

ἀνόνητον ἄρ᾽ ὦ θυλάκιόν σ᾽ εἶχον ἄγαλμα.
ἢ ἔ. πάρα νῷν στενάζειν.

Φιλοκλέων

φίλοι, τήκομαι μὲν
πάλαι διὰ τῆς ὀπῆς
ὑμῶν ὑπακούων.
ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐχ οἷός τ᾽ εἴμ᾽
ᾄδειν. τί ποιήσω;
τηροῦμαι δ᾽ ὑπὸ τῶνδ᾽, ἐπεὶ
βούλομαί γε πάλαι μεθ᾽ ὑμῶν
ἐλθὼν ἐπὶ τοὺς καδίσκους
κακόν τι ποιῆσαι.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ Ζεῦ Ζεῦ μέγα βροντήσας
ἤ με ποίησον καπνὸν ἐξαίφνης
ἢ Προξενίδην ἢ τὸν Σέλλου
τοῦτον τὸν ψευδαμάμαξυν.
τόλμησον ἄναξ χαρίσασθαί μοι,
πάθος οἰκτίρας: ἤ με κεραυνῷ
διατινθαλέῳ σπόδισον ταχέως,
κἄπειτ᾽ ἀνελών μ᾽ ἀποφυσήσας
εἰς ὀξάλμην ἔμβαλε θερμήν:
ἢ δῆτα λίθον με ποίησον ἐφ᾽ οὗ
τὰς χοιρίνας ἀριθμοῦσι. **Χορός**

τίς γάρ ἐσθ᾽ ὁ ταῦτά σ᾽ εἴργων
κἀποκλῄων τῇ θύρᾳ; λέξον: πρὸς εὔνους γὰρ φράσεις. **Φιλοκλέων**

οὑμὸς υἱός. ἀλλὰ μὴ βοᾶτε: καὶ γὰρ τυγχάνει
οὐτοσὶ πρόσθεν καθεύδων. ἀλλ᾽ ὕφεσθε τοῦ τόνου.

Χορός

τοῦ δ᾽ ἕφεξιν ὦ μάταιε ταῦτα δρᾶν σε βούλεται;
καὶ τίνα πρόφασιν ἔχων;

Φιλοκλέων

οὐκ ἐᾷ μ᾽ ὦνδρες δικάζειν οὐδὲ δρᾶν οὐδὲν κακόν,
ἀλλά μ᾽ εὐωχεῖν ἕτοιμός ἐστ᾽: ἐγὼ δ᾽ οὐ βούλομαι.

Χορός

τοῦτ᾽ ἐτόλμησ᾽ ὁ μιαρὸς χανεῖν
ὁ Δημολογοκλέων ὅδ᾽,
ὅτι λέγεις σύ τι περὶ τῶν νεῶν
ἀληθές. οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποθ᾽
οὗτος ἀνὴρ τοῦτ᾽ ἐτόλμησεν
λέγειν, εἰ
μὴ ξυνωμότης τις ἦν. **Χορός**

ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ τούτων ὥρα τινά σοι ζητεῖν καινὴν ἐπίνοιαν,
ἥτις σε λάθρᾳ τἀνδρὸς τουδὶ καταβῆναι δεῦρο ποιήσει. **Φιλοκλέων**

τίς ἂν οὖν εἴη; ζητεῖθ᾽ ὑμεῖς, ὡς πᾶν ἂν ἔγωγε ποιοίην:
οὕτω κιττῶ διὰ τῶν σανίδων μετὰ χοιρίνης περιελθεῖν.

Χορός

ἔστιν ὀπὴ δῆθ᾽ ἥντιν᾽ ἂν ἔνδοθεν οἷός τ᾽ εἴης διορύξαι,
εἶτ᾽ ἐκδῦναι ῥάκεσιν κρυφθεὶς ὥσπερ πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς; **Φιλοκλέων**

πάντα πέφαρκται κοὐκ ἔστιν ὀπῆς οὐδ᾽ εἰ σέρφῳ διαδῦναι.
ἀλλ᾽ ἄλλο τι δεῖ ζητεῖν ὑμᾶς: ὀπίαν δ᾽ οὐκ ἔστι γενέσθαι.

Χορός

μέμνησαι δῆθ᾽, ὅτ᾽ ἐπὶ στρατιᾶς κλέψας ποτὲ τοὺς ὀβελίσκους
ἵεις σαυτὸν κατὰ τοῦ τείχους ταχέως, ὅτε Νάξος ἑάλω.

Φιλοκλέων

οἶδ᾽: ἀλλὰ τί τοῦτ᾽; οὐδὲν γὰρ τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἐκείνῳ προσόμοιον.

ἥβων γὰρ κἀδυνάμην κλέπτειν, ἴσχυόν τ᾽ αὐτὸς ἐμαυτοῦ, **Φιλοκλέων**

κοὐδείς μ᾽ ἐφύλαττ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐξῆν μοι
φεύγειν ἀδεῶς. νῦν δὲ ξὺν ὅπλοις
ἄνδρες ὁπλῖται διαταξάμενοι
κατὰ τὰς διόδους σκοπιωροῦνται,
τὼ δὲ δύ᾽ αὐτῶν ἐπὶ ταῖσι θύραις
ὥσπερ με γαλῆν κρέα κλέψασαν
τηροῦσιν ἔχοντ᾽ ὀβελίσκους. **Χορός**

ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν ἐκπόριζε
μηχανὴν ὅπως τάχισθ᾽: ἕως γάρ, ὦ μελίττιον. **Φιλοκλέων**

διατραγεῖν τοίνυν κράτιστόν ἐστί μοι τὸ δίκτυον.
ἡ δέ μοι Δίκτυννα συγγνώμην ἔχοι τοῦ δικτύου.

Χορός

ταῦτα μὲν πρὸς ἀνδρός ἐστ᾽ ἄνοντος ἐς σωτηρίαν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἔπαγε τὴν γνάθον.

Φιλοκλέων

διατέτρωκται τοῦτό γ᾽. ἀλλὰ μὴ βοᾶτε μηδαμῶς,
ἀλλὰ τηρώμεσθ᾽ ὅπως μὴ Βδελυκλέων αἰσθήσεται.

Χορός

μηδὲν ὦ τᾶν δέδιθι, μηδέν:
ὡς ἐγὼ τοῦτόν γ᾽, ἐὰν γρύξῃ
τι, ποιήσω δακεῖν τὴν
καρδίαν καὶ τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς
δρόμον δραμεῖν, ἵν᾽ εἰδῇ
μὴ πατεῖν τὰ
τοῖν θεοῖν ψηφίσματα. **Χορός**

ἀλλ᾽ ἐξάψας διὰ τῆς θυρίδος τὸ καλῴδιον εἶτα καθίμα
δήσας σαυτὸν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐμπλησάμενος Διοπείθους. **Φιλοκλέων**

ἄγε νυν, ἢν αἰσθομένω τούτω ζητῆτόν μ᾽ ἐσκαλαμᾶσθαι

κἀνασπαστὸν ποιεῖν εἴσω, τί ποιήσετε; φράζετε νυνί.

Χορός

ἀμυνοῦμέν σοι τὸν πρινώδη θυμὸν ἅπαντες καλέσαντες
ὥστ᾽ οὐ δυνατόν σ᾽ εἴργειν ἔσται: τοιαῦτα ποιήσομεν ἡμεῖς.

Φιλοκλέων

385 δράσω τοίνυν ὑμῖν πίσυνος, καὶ — μανθάνετ᾽; — ἤν τι πάθω ‘γώ,
ἀνελόντες καὶ κατακλαύσαντες θεῖναί μ᾽ ὑπὸ τοῖσι δρυφάκτοις.

Χορός

οὐδὲν πείσει: μηδὲν δείσῃς. ἀλλ᾽ ὦ βέλτιστε καθίει
σαυτὸν θαρρῶν κἀπευξάμενος τοῖσι πατρῴοισι θεοῖσιν.

Φιλοκλέων

ὦ Λύκε δέσποτα, γείτων ἥρως: σὺ γὰρ οἶσπερ ἐγὼ κεχάρησαι,
τοῖς δακρύοισιν τῶν φευγόντων ἀεὶ καὶ τοῖς ὀλοφυρμοῖς:
ᾤκησας γοῦν ἐπίτηδες ἰὼν ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἵνα ταῦτ᾽ ἀκροῷο,
κἀβουλήθης μόνος ἡρώων παρὰ τὸν κλάοντα καθῆσθαι.
ἐλέησον καὶ σῶσον νυνὶ τὸν σαυτοῦ πλησιόχωρον:
κοὐ μή ποτέ σου παρὰ τὰς κάννας οὐρήσω μηδ᾽ ἀποπάρδω.

Βδελυκλέων

395 οὗτος ἐγείρου.

Ξανθίας
τί τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽;

Βδελυκλέων
ὥσπερ φωνή μέ τις ἐγκεκύκλωται.

Ξανθίας

μῶν ὁ γέρων πῃ διαδύεται αὖ;

Βδελυκλέων
μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἀλλὰ καθιμᾷ
αὐτὸν δήσας.

Ξανθίας
ὦ μιαρώτατε τί ποιεῖς; οὐ μὴ καταβήσει;

Βδελυκλέων

ἀνάβαιν᾽ ἀνύσας κατὰ τὴν ἑτέραν καὶ ταῖσιν φυλλάσι παῖε,
ἵν πως πρύμνην ἀνακρούσηται πληγεὶς ταῖς εἰρεσιώναις.

Φιλοκλέων

οὐ ξυλλήψεσθ᾽ ὁπόσοισι δίκαι τῆτες μέλλουσιν ἔσεσθαι,
ὦ Σμικυθίων καὶ Τεισιάδη καὶ Χρήμων καὶ Φερέδειπνε;
πότε δ᾽, εἰ μὴ νῦν, ἐπαρήξετέ μοι, πρίν μ᾽ εἴσω μᾶλλον ἄγεσθαι; **Χορός**

εἰπέ μοι τί μέλλομεν κινεῖν ἐκείνην τὴν χολήν,
ἥνπερ, ἡνίκ᾽ ἄν τις ἡμῶν ὀργίσῃ τὴν σφηκιάν;
νῦν ἐκεῖνο νῦν ἐκεῖνο
τοὐξύθυμον, ᾧ κολαζόμεσθα,
κέντρον †ἐντέτατ᾽ ὀξύ†.
ἀλλὰ θαἰμάτια βαλόντες ὡς τάχιστα, παιδία,
θεῖτε καὶ βοᾶτε, καὶ Κλέωνι ταῦτ᾽ ἀγγέλλετε,
καὶ κελεύετ᾽ αὐτὸν ἥκειν
ὡς ἐπ᾽ ἄνδρα μισόπολιν
ὄντα κἀπολούμενον, ὅτι
τόνδε λόγον ἐσφέρει,
μὴ δικάζειν δίκας.

Βδελυκλέων

ὦγαθοὶ τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ἀκούσατ᾽, ἀλλὰ μὴ κεκράγετε.

Χορός

νὴ Δί᾽ ἐς τὸν οὐρανόν γ᾽.

Βδελυκλέων

ὡς τοῦδ᾽ ἐγὼ οὐ μεθήσομαι.

Χορός

ταῦτα δῆτ᾽ οὐ δεινὰ καὶ τυραννίς ἐστιν ἐμφανής;
ὦ πόλις καὶ Θεώρου θεοισεχθρία,
κεΐ τις ἄλλος προέστηκεν ἡμῶν κόλαξ.

Ξανθίας

Ἡράκλεις καὶ κέντρ᾽ ἔχουσιν. οὐχ ὁρᾷς ὦ δέσποτα;

Βδελυκλέων

οἷς γ᾽ ἀπώλεσαν Φίλιππον ἐν δίκῃ τὸν Γοργίου.

Χορός

καὶ σέ γ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἐξολοῦμεν: ἀλλὰ πᾶς ἐπίστρεφε
δεῦρο κἀξείρας τὸ κέντρον εἶτ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν ἴεσο,
ξυσταλεὶς εὔτακτος ὀργῆς καὶ μένους ἐμπλήμενος,
ὡς ἂν εὖ εἰδῇ τὸ λοιπὸν σμῆνος οἷον ὤργισεν.

Ξανθίας

τοῦτο μέντοι δεινὸν ἤδη νὴ Δί᾽, εἰ μαχούμεθα:
ὡς ἔγωγ᾽ αὐτῶν ὁρῶν δέδοικα τὰς ἐγκεντρίδας.

Χορός

ἀλλ᾽ ἀφίει τὸν ἄνδρ᾽: εἰ δὲ μή, φήμ᾽ ἐγὼ
τὰς χελώνας μακαριεῖν σε τοῦ δέρματος.

Φιλοκλέων

εἶά νυν ὦ ξυνδικασταὶ σφῆκες ὀξυκάρδιοι,
οἱ μὲν ἐς τὸν πρωκτὸν αὐτῶν ἐσπέτεσθ᾽ ὠργισμένοι,
οἱ δὲ τὠφθαλμὼ κύκλῳ κεντεῖτε καὶ τοὺς δακτύλους.

Βδελυκλέων

ὦ Μίδα καὶ Φρὺξ βοήθει δεῦρο καὶ Μασιντύα,
καὶ λάβεσθε τουτουὶ καὶ μὴ μεθῆσθε μηδενί:
εἰ δὲ μή, ‘ν πέδαις παχείαις οὐδὲν ἀριστήσετε.
ὡς ἐγὼ πολλῶν ἀκούσας οἶδα θρίων τὸν ψόφον.

Χορός

εἰ δὲ μὴ τοῦτον μεθήσεις, ἔν τί σοι παγήσεται.

Φιλοκλέων

ὦ Κέκροψ ἥρως ἄναξ τὰ πρὸς ποδῶν Δρακοντίδη,
περιορᾷς οὕτω μ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἀνδρῶν βαρβάρων χειρούμενον,
οὓς ἐγὼ ‘δίδαξα κλάειν τέτταρ᾽ ἐς τὴν χοίνικα; **Χορός**

εἶτα δῆτ᾽ οὐ πόλλ᾽ ἔνεστι δεινὰ τῷ γήρᾳ κακά;
δηλαδή: καὶ νῦν γε τούτω τὸν παλαιὸν δεσπότην
πρὸς βίαν χειροῦσιν, οὐδὲν τῶν πάλαι μεμνημένοι
διφθερῶν κἀξωμίδων, ἃς οὗτος αὐτοῖς ἠμπόλα,
καὶ κυνᾶς: καὶ τοὺς πόδας χειμῶνος ὄντος ὠφέλει,
ὥστε μὴ ῥιγῶν ἑκάστοτ᾽: ἀλλὰ τούτοις γ᾽ οὐκ ἔνι
οὐδ᾽ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν αἰδὼς τῶν παλαιῶν ἐμβάδων.

Φιλοκλέων

οὐκ ἀφήσεις οὐδὲ νυνί μ᾽ ὦ κάκιστον θηρίον,
οὐδ᾽ ἀναμνησθεὶς ὅθ᾽ εὑρὼν τοὺς βότρυς κλέπτοντά σε
προσαγαγὼν πρὸς τὴν ἐλάαν ἐξέδειρ᾽ εὖ κἀνδρικῶς,
ὥστε σε ζηλωτὸν εἶναι; σὺ δ᾽ ἀχάριστος ἦσθ᾽ ἄρα.
ἀλλ᾽ ἄνες με καὶ σὺ καὶ σύ, πρὶν τὸν υἱὸν ἐκδραμεῖν.

Χορός

ἀλλὰ τούτων μὲν τάχ᾽ ἡμῖν δώσετον καλὴν δίκην,
οὐκέτ᾽ ἐς μακρὰν ἴν᾽ εἰδῆθ᾽ οἷός ἐστ᾽ ἀνδρῶν τρόπος
ὀξυθύμων καὶ δικαίων καὶ βλεπόντων κάρδαμα.

Βδελυκλέων

παῖε παῖ ὦ Ξανθία τοὺς σφῆκας ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας.

Ξανθίας

ἀλλὰ δρῶ τοῦτ᾽: ἀλλὰ καὶ σὺ τῦφε πολλῷ τῷ καπνῷ.

Σωσίας

οὐχὶ σοῦσθ᾽; οὐκ ἐς κόρακας; οὐκ ἄπιτε; παῖε τῷ ξύλῳ.

Ξανθίας

καὶ σὺ προσθεὶς Αἰσχίνην ἔντυφε τὸν Σελλαρτίου.
ἆρ᾽ ἐμέλλομέν ποθ᾽ ὑμᾶς ἀποσοβήσειν τῷ χρόνῳ.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀλλὰ μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ ῥᾳδίως οὕτως ἂν αὐτοὺς διέφυγες,
εἴπερ ἔτυχον τῶν μελῶν τῶν Φιλοκλέους βεβρωκότες.

Χορός

ἆρα δῆτ᾽ οὐκ αὐτὰ δῆλα
τοῖς πένησιν, ἡ τυραννὶς
†ὡς λάθρᾳ γ᾽ ἐλάνθαν᾽ ὑπιοῦσά με,†
εἰ σύ γ᾽ ὦ πόνῳ πόνηρε καὶ κομηταμυνία
τῶν νόμων ἡμᾶς ἀπείργεις ὧν ἔθηκεν ἡ πόλις,
οὔτε τιν᾽ ἔχων πρόφασιν
οὔτε λόγον εὐτράπελον,
αὐτὸς ἄρχων μόνος; **Βδελυκλέων**

ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως ἄνευ μάχης καὶ τῆς κατοξείας βοῆς
ἐς λόγους ἔλθοιμεν ἀλλήλοισι καὶ διαλλαγάς;

Χορός

σοὺς λόγους ὦ μισόδημε καὶ μοναρχίας ἐραστά,
καὶ ξυνὼν Βρασίδᾳ καὶ φορῶν κράσπεδα
στεμμάτων τήν θ᾽ ὑπήνην ἄκουρον τρέφων; **Βδελυκλέων**

νὴ Δί᾽ ἦ μοι κρεῖττον ἐκστῆναι τὸ παράπαν τοῦ πατρὸς
μᾶλλον ἢ κακοῖς τοσούτοις ναυμαχεῖν ὀσημέραι.

Χορός

οὐδὲ μὴν οὐδ᾽ ἐν σελίνῳ σοὐστὶν οὐδ᾽ ἐν πηγάνῳ:
τοῦτο γὰρ παρεμβαλοῦμεν τῶν τριχοινίκων ἐπῶν.
ἀλλὰ νῦν μὲν οὐδὲν ἀλγεῖς, ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν ξυνήγορος
ταὐτὰ ταῦτα σου καταντλῇ καὶ ξυνωμότας καλῇ.

Βδελυκλέων

ἆρ᾽ ἂν ὦ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν ὑμεῖς ἀπαλλαχθεῖτέ μου;
ἢ δέδοκταί μοι δέρεσθαι καὶ δέρειν δι᾽ ἡμέρας; **Χορός**

οὐδέποτέ γ᾽, οὐχ ἕως ἄν τί μου λοιπὸν ᾖ,
ὅστις ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τυραννίδ᾽ ὧδ᾽ ἐστάλης.

Βδελυκλέων

ὡς ἅπανθ᾽ ὑμῖν τυραννίς ἐστι καὶ ξυνωμόται,
ἤν τε μεῖζον ἤν τ᾽ ἔλαττον πρᾶγμά τις κατηγορῇ,
ἧς ἐγὼ οὐκ ἤκουσα τοὔνομ᾽ οὐδὲ πεντήκοντ᾽ ἐτῶν:
νῦν δὲ πολλῷ τοῦ ταρίχους ἐστὶν ἀξιωτέρα,
ὥστε καὶ δὴ τοὔνομ᾽ αὐτῆς ἐν ἀγορᾷ κυλίνδεται.
ἦν μὲν ὠνῆταί τις ὀρφὼς μεμβράδας δὲ μὴ ‘θέλῃ,
εὐθέως εἴρηχ᾽ ὁ πωλῶν πλησίον τὰς μεμβράδας:
‘οὗτος ὀψωνεῖν ἔοιχ᾽ ἄνθρωπος ἐπὶ τυραννίδι.’
ἦν δὲ γήτειον προσαιτῇ ταῖς ἀφύαις ἥδυσμά τι,
ἡ λαχανόπωλις παραβλέψασά φησι θατέρῳ:
‘εἰπέ μοι, γήτειον αἰτεῖς: πότερον ἐπὶ τυραννίδι,
ἢ νομίζεις τὰς Ἀθήνας σοὶ φέρειν ἡδύσματα;’

Ξανθίας

κἀμέ γ᾽ ἡ πόρνη χθὲς εἰσελθόντα τῆς μεσημβρίας,
ὅτι κελητίσαι ‘κέλευον, ὀξυθυμηθεῖσά μοι
ἤρετ᾽ εἰ τὴν Ἱππίου καθίσταμαι τυραννίδα.

Βδελυκλέων

ταῦτα γὰρ τούτοις ἀκούειν ἡδέ, εἰ καὶ νῦν ἐγὼ
τὸν πατέρ᾽ ὅτι βούλομαι τούτων ἀπαλλαχθέντα τῶν

ὀρθροφοιτοσυκοφαντοδικοταλαιπώρων τρόπων
ζῆν βίον γενναῖον ὥσπερ Μόρυχος, αἰτίαν ἔχω
ταῦτα δρᾶν ξυνωμότης ὢν καὶ φρονῶν τυραννικά.

Φιλοκλέων

νὴ Δί᾽ ἐν δίκῃ γ᾽: ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐδ᾽ ἂν ὀρνίθων γάλα
ἀντὶ τοῦ βίου λάβοιμ᾽ ἂν οὗ με νῦν ἀποστερεῖς:
οὐδὲ χαίρω βατίσιν οὐδ᾽ ἐγχέλεσιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἥδιον ἄν
δικίδιον σμικρὸν φάγοιμ᾽ ἂν ἐν λοπάδι πεπνιγμένον.

Βδελυκλέων

νὴ Δί᾽ εἰθίσθης γὰρ ἥδεσθαι τοιούτοις πράγμασιν:
ἀλλ᾽ ἐὰν σιγῶν ἀνάσχῃ καὶ μάθῃς ἁγὼ λέγω,
ἀναδιδάξειν οἴομαί σ᾽ ὡς πάντα ταῦθ᾽ ἁμαρτάνεις.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐξαμαρτάνω δικάζων;

Βδελυκλέων
καταγελώμενος μὲν οὖν
οὐκ ἐπαΐεις ὑπ᾽ ἀνδρῶν, οὓς σὺ μόνον οὐ προσκυνεῖς.
ἀλλὰ δουλεύων λέληθας.

Φιλοκλέων
παῦε δουλείαν λέγων,
ὅστις ἄρχω τῶν ἁπάντων.

Βδελυκλέων
οὐ σύ γ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπηρετεῖς
οἰόμενος ἄρχειν: ἐπεὶ δίδαξον ἡμᾶς ὦ πάτερ,
ἥτις ἡ τιμή ‘στί σοι καρπουμένῳ τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

Φιλοκλέων

πάνυ γε, καὶ τούτοισί γ᾽ ἐπιτρέψαι ‘θέλω.

Βδελυκλέων

καὶ μὴν ἐγώ.
ἄφετέ νυν ἅπαντες αὐτόν.

Φιλοκλέων
καὶ ξίφος γέ μοι δότε.
ἢν γὰρ ἡττηθῶ λέγων σου, περιπεσοῦμαι τῷ ξίφει.

Βδελυκλέων

εἰπέ μοι, τί δ᾽ ἦν, τὸ δεῖνα, τῇ διαίτῃ μὴ ‘μμένῃς;

Φιλοκλέων

μηδέποτε πίοιμ᾽ ἀκράτου μισθὸν ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος.

Χορός

νῦν δὴ τὸν ἐκ θἠμετέρου
γυμνασίου δεῖ τι λέγειν
καινόν, ὅπως φανήσει —

Βδελυκλέων

ἐνεγκάτω μοι δεῦρο τὴν κίστην τις ὡς τάχιστα.
ἀτὰρ φανεῖ ποῖός τις ὤν, ἢν ταῦτα παρακελεύῃ; **Χορός**

μὴ κατὰ τὸν νεανίαν
τονδὶ λέγων. ὁρᾷς γὰρ ὥς
σοι μέγας ἐστὶν ἀγὼν
καὶ περὶ τῶν ἁπάντων,
εἴπερ, ὃ μὴ γένοιθ᾽, οὗτός
σ᾽ ἐθέλει κρατῆσαι.

Βδελυκλέων

καὶ μὴν ὅσ᾽ ἂν λέξῃ γ᾽ ἁπλῶς μνημόσυνα γράψομαι ‘γώ.

Φιλοκλέων

τί γὰρ φάθ᾽ ὑμεῖς, ἢν ὁδί με τῷ λόγῳ κρατήσῃ;

Χορός

οὐκέτι πρεσβυτῶν ὄχλος
χρήσιμος ἔστ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἀκαρῆ:
σκωπτόμενοι δ᾽ ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς
θαλλοφόροι καλούμεθ᾽, ἀντωμοσιῶν
κελύφη.

Χορός

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ περὶ τῆς πάσης μέλλων βασιλείας ἀντιλογήσειν
τῆς ἡμετέρας, νυνὶ θαρρῶν πᾶσαν γλῶτταν βασάνιζε. **Φιλοκλέων**

καὶ μὴν εὐθύς γ᾽ ἀπὸ βαλβίδων περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀποδείξω
τῆς ἡμετέρας ὡς οὐδεμιᾶς ἥττων ἐστὶν βασιλείας.
τί γὰρ εὔδαιμον καὶ μακαριστὸν μᾶλλον νῦν ἐστὶ δικαστοῦ,
ἢ τρυφερώτερον ἢ δεινότερον ζῷον, καὶ ταῦτα γέροντος;
ὃν πρῶτα μὲν ἕρποντ᾽ ἐξ εὐνῆς τηροῦσ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῖσι δρυφάκτοις
ἄνδρες μεγάλοι καὶ τετραπήχεις: κἄπειτ᾽ εὐθὺς προσιόντι
ἐμβάλλει μοι τὴν χεῖρ᾽ ἁπαλὴν τῶν δημοσίων κεκλοφυῖαν:
ἱκετεύουσίν θ᾽ ὑποκύπτοντες τὴν φωνὴν οἰκτροχοοῦντες:
‘οἴκτιρόν μ᾽ ὦ πάτερ, αἰτοῦμαί σ᾽, εἰ καὐτὸς πώποθ᾽ ὑφείλου
ἀρχὴν ἄρξας ἢ ‘πὶ στρατιᾶς τοῖς ξυσσίτοις ἀγοράζων:’
ὃς ἔμ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἂν ζῶντ᾽ ᾔδειν εἰ μὴ διὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀπόφυξιν.

Βδελυκλέων

τουτὶ περὶ τῶν ἀντιβολούντων ἔστω τὸ μνημόσυνόν μοι.

Φιλοκλέων

εἶτ᾽ εἰσελθὼν ἀντιβοληθεὶς καὶ τὴν ὀργὴν ἀπομορχθεὶς
ἔνδον τούτων ὧν ἂν φάσκω πάντων οὐδὲν πεποίηκα,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀκροῶμαι πάσας φωνὰς ἱέντων εἰς ἀπόφυξιν.
φέρ᾽ ἴδω, τί γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀκοῦσαι θώπευμ᾽ ἐνταῦθα δικαστῇ;
οἱ μέν γ᾽ ἀποκλάονται πενίαν αὐτῶν καὶ προστιθέασι
κακὰ πρὸς τοῖς οὖσιν, † ἕως ἀνιῶν ἂν ἰσώσῃ τοῖσιν ἐμοῖσιν: †
οἱ δὲ λέγουσιν μύθους ἡμῖν, οἱ δ᾽ Αἰσώπου τι γέλοιον:
οἱ δὲ σκώπτουσ᾽, ἵν᾽ ἐγὼ γελάσω καὶ τὸν θυμὸν καταθῶμαι.

κἂν μὴ τούτοις ἀναπειθώμεσθα, τὰ παιδάρι᾽ εὐθὺς ἀνέλκει
τὰς θηλείας καὶ τοὺς υἱεῖς τῆς χειρός, ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀκροῶμαι:
τὰ δὲ συγκύψανθ᾽ ἅμα βληχᾶται: κἄπειθ᾽ ὁ πατὴρ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν
ὥσπερ θεὸν ἀντιβολεῖ με τρέμων τῆς εὐθύνης ἀπολῦσαι:
‘εἰ μὲν χαίρεις ἀρνὸς φωνῇ, παιδὸς φωνὴν ἐλεήσαις:’
εἰ δ᾽ αὖ τοῖς χοιριδίοις χαίρω, θυγατρὸς φωνῇ με πιθέσθαι.
χἠμεῖς αὐτῷ τότε τῆς ὀργῆς ὀλίγον τὸν κόλλοπ᾽ ἀνεῖμεν.
ἆρ᾽ οὐ μεγάλη τοῦτ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἀρχὴ καὶ τοῦ πλούτου καταχήνη; **Βδελυκλέων**

δεύτερον αὖ σου τουτὶ γράφομαι, τὴν τοῦ πλούτου καταχήνην:
καὶ τἀγαθά μοι μέμνησ᾽ ἄχεις φάσκων τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἄρχειν.

Φιλοκλέων

παίδων τοίνυν δοκιμαζομένων αἰδοῖα πάρεστι θεᾶσθαι.
κἂν Οἴαγρος εἰσέλθῃ φεύγων, οὐκ ἀποφεύγει πρὶν ἂν ἡμῖν
ἐκ τῆς Νιόβης εἴπῃ ῥῆσιν τὴν καλλίστην ἀπολέξας.
κἂν αὐλητής γε δίκην νικᾷ, ταύτης ἡμῖν ἐπίχειρα
ἐν φορβειᾷ τοῖσι δικασταῖς ἔξοδον ηὔλησ᾽ ἀπιοῦσι.
κἂν ἀποθνήσκων ὁ πατήρ τῳ δῷ καταλείπων παῖδ᾽ ἐπίκληρον,
κλάειν ἡμεῖς μακρὰ τὴν κεφαλὴν εἰπόντες τῇ διαθήκῃ
καὶ τῇ κόγχῃ τῇ πάνυ σεμνῶς τοῖς σημείοισιν ἐπούσῃ,
ἔδομεν ταύτην ὅστις ἂν ἡμᾶς ἀντιβολήσας ἀναπείσῃ.
καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἀνυπεύθυνοι δρῶμεν, τῶν δ᾽ ἄλλων οὐδεμί᾽ ἀρχή.

Βδελυκλέων

τουτὶ γάρ τοι σεμνόν, τούτων ὧν εἴρηκας μακαρίζω:
τῆς δ᾽ ἐπικλήρου τὴν διαθήκην ἀδικεῖς ἀνακογχυλιάζων.

Φιλοκλέων

ἔτι δ᾽ ἡ βουλὴ χὠ δῆμος ὅταν κρῖναι μέγα πρᾶγμ᾽ ἀπορήσῃ
ἐψήφισται τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας τοῖσι δικασταῖς παραδοῦναι:
εἶτ᾽ Εὔαθλος χὠ μέγας οὗτος Κολακώνυμος ἀσπιδαποβλὴς
οὐχὶ προδώσειν ἡμᾶς φασίν, περὶ τοῦ πλήθους δὲ μαχεῖσθαι.
κἀν τῷ δήμῳ γνώμην οὐδεὶς πώποτ᾽ ἐνίκησεν, ἐὰν μὴ
εἴπῃ τὰ δικαστήρι᾽ ἀφεῖναι πρώτιστα μίαν δικάσαντας:
αὐτὸς δὲ Κλέων ὁ κεκραξιδάμας μόνον ἡμᾶς οὐ περιτρώγει,

ἀλλὰ φυλάττει διὰ χειρὸς ἔχων καὶ τὰς μυίας ἀπαμύνει.
σὺ δὲ τὸν πατέρ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὁτιοῦν τούτων τὸν σαυτοῦ πώποτ᾽ ἔδρασας.
ἀλλὰ Θέωρος, καίτοὐστὶν ἀνὴρ Εὐφημίου οὐδὲν ἐλάττων,
τὸν σφόγγον ἔχων ἐκ τῆς λεκάνης τἀμβάδι᾽ ἡμῶν περικωνεῖ.
σκέψαι μ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν οἵων ἀποκλήεις καὶ κατερύκεις,
ἣν δουλείαν οὖσαν ἔφασκες καὶ ὑπηρεσίαν ἀποδείξειν.

Βδελυκλέων

ἔμπλησο λέγων: πάντως γάρ τοι παύσει ποτὲ κἀναφανήσει
πρωκτὸς λουτροῦ περιγιγνόμενος τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς περισέμνου.

Φιλοκλέων

ὃ δέ γ᾽ ἥδιστον τούτων ἐστὶν πάντων, οὗ ‘γὼ ‘πελελήσμην,
ὅταν οἴκαδ᾽ ἴω τὸν μισθὸν ἔχων, κἄπειθ᾽ ἥκονθ᾽ ἅμα πάντες
ἀσπάζωνται διὰ τἀργύριον, καὶ πρῶτα μὲν ἡ θυγάτηρ με
ἀπονίζῃ καὶ τὼ πόδ᾽ ἀλείφῃ καὶ προσκύψασα φιλήσῃ
καὶ παππίζουσ᾽ ἅμα τῇ γλώττῃ τὸ τριώβολον ἐκκαλαμᾶται,
καὶ τὸ γύναιόν μ᾽ ὑποθωπεῦσαν φυστὴν μᾶζαν προσενέγκῃ,
κἄπειτα καθεζομένη παρ᾽ ἐμοὶ προσαναγκάζῃ, ‘φάγε τουτί,
ἔντραγε τουτί:’ τούτοισιν ἐγὼ γάνυμαι, κοὐ μή με δεήσῃ
ἐς σὲ βλέψαι καὶ τὸν ταμίαν, ὁπότ᾽ ἄριστον παραθήσει
καταρασάμενος καὶ τονθορύσας. ἀλλ᾽ ἢν μή μοι ταχὺ μάξῃ,
τάδε κέκτημαι πρόβλημα κακῶν, σκευὴν βελέων ἀλεωρήν.
κἂν οἶνόν μοι μὴ ‘γχῇς σὺ πιεῖν, τὸν ὄνον τόνδ᾽ ἐσκεκόμισμαι
οἴνου μεστόν, κᾆτ᾽ ἐγχέομαι κλίνας: οὗτος δὲ κεχηνὼς
βρωμησάμενος τοῦ σοῦ δίνου μέγα καὶ στράτιον κατέπαρδεν.
ἆρ᾽ οὐ μεγάλην ἀρχὴν ἄρχω καὶ τοῦ Διὸς οὐδὲν ἐλάττω, **Φιλοκλέων**

ὅστις ἀκούω ταὔθ᾽ ἅπερ ὁ Ζεύς;
ἢν γοῦν ἡμεῖς θορυβήσωμεν,
πᾶς τίς φησιν τῶν παριόντων,
‘οἷον βροντᾷ τὸ δικαστήριον,
ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ.’
κἂν ἀστράψω, ποππύζουσιν
κἀγκεχόδασίν μ᾽ οἱ πλουτοῦντες
καὶ πάνυ σεμνοί.
καὶ σὺ δέδοικάς με μάλιστ᾽ αὐτός:

νὴ τὴν Δήμητρα δέδοικας, ἐγὼ δ᾽
ἀπολοίμην εἴ σε δέδοικα. **Χορός**

οὐπώποθ᾽ οὕτω καθαρῶς
οὐδενὸς ἠκούσαμεν οὐδὲ
ξυνετῶς λέγοντος.

Φιλοκλέων

οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ ἐρήμας ᾠεθ᾽ οὕτω ῥᾳδίως τρυγήσειν.
καλῶς γὰρ ᾔδειν ὡς ἐγὼ ταύτῃ κράτιστός εἰμι.

Χορός

ὡς δ᾽ ἐπὶ πάντ᾽ ἐλήλυθεν
κοὐδὲν παρῆλθεν, ὥστ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽
ηὐξανόμην ἀκούων,
κἀν μακάρων δικάζειν
αὐτὸς ἔδοξα νήσοις,
ἡδόμενος λέγοντι.

Φιλοκλέων

ὡς οὗτος ἤδη σκορδινᾶται κἄστιν οὐκ ἐν αὐτοῦ.

Βδελυκλέων

ἦ μὴν ἐγώ σε τήμερον σκύτη βλέπειν ποιήσω.

Χορός

δεῖ δέ σε παντοίας πλέκειν
εἰς ἀπόφυξιν παλάμας.
τὴν γὰρ ἐμὴν ὀργὴν πεπᾶναι
χαλεπὸν νεανίᾳ μὴ πρὸς ἐμοῦ λέγοντι.

Χορός

πρὸς ταῦτα μύλην ἀγαθὴν ὥρα ζητεῖν σοι καὶ νεόκοπτον,
ἢν μή τι λέγῃς, ἥτις δυνατὴ τὸν ἐμὸν θυμὸν κατερεῖξαι. **Βδελυκλέων**

χαλεπὸν μὲν καὶ δεινῆς γνώμης καὶ μείζονος ἢ ‘πὶ τρυγῳδοῖς
ἰάσασθαι νόσον ἀρχαίαν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐντετοκυῖαν.
ἀτὰρ ὦ πάτερ ἡμέτερε Κρονίδη — **Φιλοκλέων**
παῦσαι καὶ μὴ πατέριζε.
εἰ μὴ γὰρ ὅπως δουλεύω ‘γώ, τουτὶ ταχέως με διδάξεις,
οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως οὐχὶ τεθνήξεις, κἂν χρῇ σπλάγχνων μ᾽ ἀπέχεσθαι.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀκρόασαί νυν ὦ παππίδιον χαλάσας ὀλίγον τὸ μέτωπον:
καὶ πρῶτον μὲν λόγισαι φαύλως, μὴ ψήφοις ἀλλ᾽ ἀπὸ χειρός,
τὸν φόρον ἡμῖν ἀπὸ τῶν πόλεων συλλήβδην τὸν προσιόντα:
κἄξω τούτου τὰ τέλη χωρὶς καὶ τὰς πολλὰς ἑκατοστάς,
πρυτανεῖα μέταλλ᾽ ἀγορὰς λιμένας μεσθοὺς καὶ δημιόπρατα.
τούτων πλήρωμα τάλαντ᾽ ἐγγὺς δισχίλια γίγνεται ἡμῖν.
ἀπὸ τούτου νυν κατάθες μισθὸν τοῖσι δικασταῖς ἐνιαυτοῦ
ἓξ χιλιάσιν, κοὔπω πλείους ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ κατένασθεν,
γίγνεται ἡμῖν ἑκατὸν δήπου καὶ πεντήκοντα τάλαντα.

Φιλοκλέων

οὐδ᾽ ἡ δεκάτη τῶν προσιόντων ἡμῖν ἄρ᾽ ἐγίγνεθ᾽ ὁ μισθός.

Βδελυκλέων

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ μέντοι.

Φιλοκλέων
καὶ ποῖ τρέπεται δὴ ‘πειτα τὰ χρήματα τἄλλα;

Βδελυκλέων

ἐς τούτους τοὺς ‘οὐχὶ προδώσω τὸν Ἀθηναίων κολοσυρτόν,
ἀλλὰ μαχοῦμαι περὶ τοῦ πλήθους ἀεί.’ σὺ γὰρ ὦ πάτερ αὐτοὺς
ἄρχειν αἱρεῖ σαυτοῦ τούτοις τοῖς ῥηματίοις περιπεφθείς.
κᾆθ᾽ οὗτοι μὲν δωροδοκοῦσιν κατὰ πεντήκοντα τάλαντα
ἀπὸ τῶν πόλεων ἐπαπειλοῦντες τοιαυτὶ κἀναφοβοῦντες,
‘δώσετε τὸν φόρον, ἢ βροντήσας τὴν πόλιν ὑμῶν ἀνατρέψω.’
σὺ δὲ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀγαπᾷς τῆς σῆς τοὺς ἀργελόφους περιτρώγων.
οἱ δὲ ξύμμαχοι ὡς ᾔσθηνται τὸν μὲν σύρφακα τὸν ἄλλον

ἐκ κηθαρίον λαγαριζόμενον καὶ τραγαλιζοντα τὸ μηδέν,
σὲ μὲν ἡγοῦνται Κόννου ψῆφον, τούτοισι δὲ δωροφοροῦσιν
ὕρχας οἶνον δάπιδας τυρὸν μέλι σήσαμα προσκεφάλαια
φιάλας χλανίδας στεφάνους ὅρμους ἐκπώματα πλουθυγιείαν:
σοὶ δ᾽ ὧν ἄρχεις, πολλὰ μὲν ἐν γῇ πολλὰ δ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ὑγρᾷ πιτυλεύσας,
οὐδεὶς οὐδὲ σκορόδου κεφαλὴν τοῖς ἐψητοῖσι δίδωσιν.

Φιλοκλέων

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ παρ᾽ Εὐχαρίδου καὐτὸς τρεῖς γ᾽ ἄγλιθας μετέπεμψα.
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτήν μοι τὴν δουλείαν οὐκ ἀποφαίνων ἀποκναίεις.

Βδελυκλέων

οὐ γὰρ μεγάλη δουλεία ‘στὶν τούτους μὲν ἅπαντας ἐν ἀρχαῖς
αὐτούς τ᾽ εἶναι καὶ τοὺς κόλακας τοὺς τούτων μισθοφοροῦντας;
σοὶ δ᾽ ἤν τις δῷ τοὺς τρεῖς ὀβολούς, ἀγαπᾷς: οὓς αὐτὸς ἐλαύνων
καὶ πεζομαχῶν καὶ πολιορκῶν ἐκτήσω πολλὰ πονήτας.
καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἐπιταττόμενος φοιτᾷς, ὃ μάλιστά μ᾽ ἀπάγχει,
ὅταν εἰσελθὼν μειράκιόν σοι κατάπυγον, Χαιρέου υἱός,
ὠδὶ διαβὰς διακινηθεὶς τῷ σώματι καὶ τρυφερανθείς,
ἥκειν εἴπῃ πρῲ κἀν ὥρᾳ δικάσονθ᾽, ὡς ὅστις ἂν ὑμῶν
ὕστερος ἔλθῃ τοῦ σημείου, τὸ τριώβολον οὐ κομιεῖται:
αὐτὸς δὲ φέρει τὸ συνηγορικὸν δραχμήν, κἂν ὕστερος ἔλθῃ:
καὶ κοινωνῶν τῶν ἀρχόντων ἑτέρῳ τινὶ τῶν μεθ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ,
ἤν τίς τι διδῷ τῶν φευγόντων, ξυνθέντε τὸ πρᾶγμα δύ᾽ ὄντε
ἐσπουδάκατον, κᾆθ᾽ ὡς πρίονθ᾽ ὁ μὲν ἕλκει ὁ δ᾽ ἀντενέδωκε:
σὺ δὲ χασκάζεις τὸν κωλακρέτην, τὸ δὲ πραττόμενόν σε λέληθεν.

Φιλοκλέων

ταυτί με ποιοῦσ᾽; οἴμοι τί λέγεις; ὥς μου τὸν θῖνα ταράττεις,
καὶ τὸν νοῦν μου προσάγεις μᾶλλον, κοὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅ τι χρῆμά με ποιεῖς.

Βδελυκλέων

σκέψαι τοίνυν ὡς ἐξόν σοι πλουτεῖν καὶ τοῖσιν ἅπασιν
ὑπὸ τῶν ἀεὶ δημιζόντων οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅπῃ ἐγκεκύκλησαι,
ὅστις πόλεων ἄρχων πλείστων ἀπὸ τοῦ Πόντου μέχρι Σαρδοῦς
οὐκ ἀπολαύεις πλὴν τοῦθ᾽ ὃ φέρεις ἀκαρῆ: καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἐρίῳ σοι

ἐνστάζουσιν κατὰ μικρὸν ἀεὶ τοῦ ζῆν ἔνεχ᾽ ὥσπερ ἔλαιον.
βούλονται γάρ σε πένητ᾽ εἶναι: καὶ τοῦθ᾽ ὧν οὕνεκ᾽ ἐρῶ σοι,
ἵνα γιγνώσκῃς τὸν τιθασευτήν, κᾆθ᾽ ὅταν οὗτός γ᾽ ἐπισίξῃ
ἐπὶ τῶν ἐχθρῶν τιν᾽ ἐπιρρύξας, ἀγρίως αὐτοῖς ἐπιπηδᾷς.
εἰ γὰρ ἐβούλοντο βίον πορίσαι τῷ δήμῳ, ῥᾴδιον ἦν ἄν.
εἰσίν γε πόλεις χίλιαι αἳ νῦν τὸν φόρον ἡμῖν ἀπάγουσι:
τούτων εἴκοσιν ἄνδρας βόσκειν εἴ τις προσέταξεν ἑκάστῃ,
δύο μυριάδ᾽ ἂν τῶν δημοτικῶν ἔζων ἐν πᾶσι λαγῴοις
καὶ στεφάνοισιν παντοδαποῖσιν καὶ πυριάτῃ,
ἄξια τῆς γῆς ἀπολαύοντες καὶ τοῦ ‘ν Μαραθῶνι τροπαίου.
νῦν δ᾽ ὥσπερ ἐλαολόγοι χωρεῖθ᾽ ἅμα τῷ τὸν μισθὸν ἔχοντι.

Φιλοκλέων

οἴμοι τί πέπονθ᾽; ὡς νάρκη μου κατὰ τῆς χειρὸς καταχεῖται,
καὶ τὸ ξίφος οὐ δύναμαι κατέχειν, ἀλλ᾽ ἤδη μαλθακός εἰμι.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀλλ᾽ ὁπόταν μὲν δείσωσ᾽ αὐτοί, τὴν Εὔβοιαν διδόασιν
ὑμῖν καὶ σῖτον ὑφίστανται κατὰ πεντήκοντα μεδίμνους
ποριεῖν: ἔδοσαν δ᾽ οὐπώποτέ σοι πλὴν πρώην πέντε μεδίμνους,
καὶ ταῦτα μόλις ξενίας φεύγων ἔλαβες κατὰ χοίνικα κριθῶν.

Βδελυκλέων

ὧν οὕνεκ᾽ ἐγώ σ᾽ ἀπέκλῃον ἀεὶ
βόσκειν ἐθέλων καὶ μὴ τούτους
ἐγχάσκειν σοι στομφάζοντας.
καὶ νῦν ἀτεχνῶς ἐθέλω παρέχειν
ὅ τι βούλει σοι,
πλὴν κωλακρέτου γάλα πίνειν. **Χορός**

ἦ που σοφὸς ἦν ὅστις ἔφασκεν, πρὶν ἂν ἀμφοῖν μῦθον ἀκούσῃς,
οὐκ ἂν δικάσαις. σὺ γὰρ οὖν νῦν μοι νικᾶν πολλῷ δεδόκησαι:
ὥστ᾽ ἤδη τὴν ὀργὴν χαλάσας τοὺς σκίπωνας καταβάλλω.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ τῆς ἡλικίας ἡμῖν τῆς αὐτῆς συνθιασῶτα, **Χορός**

πιθοῦ πιθοῦ λόγοισι, μηδ᾽ ἄφρων γένῃ

μηδ᾽ ἀτενὴς ἄγαν ἀτεράμων τ᾽ ἀνήρ.
εἴθ᾽ ὤφελέν μοι κηδεμὼν ἢ ξυγγενὴς
εἶναί τις ὅστις τοιαῦτ᾽ ἐνουθέτει.
σοὶ δὲ νῦν τις θεῶν παρὼν ἐμφανὴς
ξυλλαμβάνει τοῦ πράγματος,
καὶ δῆλός ἐστιν εὖ ποιῶν:
σὺ δὲ παρὼν δέχου.

Βδελυκλέων

καὶ μὴν θρέψω γ᾽ αὐτὸν παρέχων
ὅσα πρεσβύτῃ ξύμφορα, χόνδρον
λείχειν, χλαῖναν μαλακήν, σισύραν,
πόρνην, ἥτις τὸ πέος τρίψει
καὶ τὴν ὀσφῦν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι σιγᾷ κοὐδὲν γρύζει,
τοῦτ᾽ οὐ δύναταί με προσέσθαι.

Χορός

νενουθέτηκεν αὐτὸν ἐς τὰ πράγμαθ᾽, οἷς
τότ᾽ ἐπεμαίνετ᾽: ἔγνωκε γὰρ ἀρτίως,
λογίζεταί τ᾽ ἐκεῖνα πάνθ᾽ ἁμαρτίας
ἃ σοῦ κελεύοντος οὐκ ἐπείθετο.
νῦν δ᾽ ἴσως τοῖσι σοῖς λόγοις πείθεται
καὶ σωφρονεῖ μέντοι μεθιστὰς
ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν τὸν τρόπον
πιθόμενός τέ σοι.

Φιλοκλέων

ἰώ μοί μοι.

Βδελυκλέων
οὗτος τί βοᾷς;

Φιλοκλέων

μή μοι τούτων μηδὲν ὑπισχνοῦ.
κείνων ἔραμαι, κεῖθι γενοίμαν,

ἵν᾽ ὁ κῆρύξ φησι, ‘τίς ἀψήφιστος; ἀνιστάσθω.’
κἀπισταίην ἐπὶ τοῖς κημοῖς
ψηφιζομένων ὁ τελευταῖος.
σπεῦδ᾽ ὦ ψυχή. ποῦ μοι ψυχή;
πάρες ὦ σκιερά. μὰ τὸν Ἡρακλέα
μή νυν ἔτ᾽ ἐγὼ ‘ν τοῖσι δικασταῖς
κλέπτοντα Κλέωνα λάβοιμι.

Βδελυκλέων

ἴθ᾽ ὦ πάτερ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν ἐμοὶ πιθοῦ.

Φιλοκλέων

τί σοι πίθωμαι; λέγ᾽ ὅ τι βούλει πλὴν ἑνός.

Βδελυκλέων

ποίου; φέρ᾽ ἴδω.

Φιλοκλέων
τοῦ μὴ δικάζειν. τοῦτο δὲ
Ἅιδης διακρινεῖ πρότερον ἢ ‘γὼ πείσομαι.

Βδελυκλέων

σὺ δ᾽ οὖν, ἐπειδὴ τοῦτο κεχάρηκας ποιῶν,
ἐκεῖσε μὲν μηκέτι βάδιζ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐνθάδε
αὐτοῦ μένων δίκαζε τοῖσιν οἰκέταις.

Φιλοκλέων

περὶ τοῦ; τί ληρεῖς;

Βδελυκλέων
ταὔθ᾽ ἅπερ ἐκεῖ πράττεται:
ὅτι τὴν θύραν ἀνέῳξεν ἡ σηκὶς λάθρᾳ,
ταύτης ἐπιβολὴν ψηφιεῖ μίαν μόνην.
πάντως δὲ κἀκεῖ ταῦτ᾽ ἔδρας ἑκάστοτε.
καὶ ταῦτα μέν νυν εὐλόγως, ἢν ἐξέχῃ

ἕλη κατ᾽ ὄρθρον, ἡλιάσει πρὸς ἥλιον:
ἐὰν δὲ νείφῃ, πρὸς τὸ πῦρ καθήμενος:
ὕοντος εἴσει: κἄν ἔγρῃ μεσημβρινός,
οὐδείς σ᾽ ἀποκλῄσει θεσμοθέτης τῇ κιγκλίδι.

Φιλοκλέων

τουτί μ᾽ ἀρέσκει.

Βδελυκλέων
πρὸς δὲ τούτοις γ᾽, ἢν δίκην
λέγῃ μακράν τις, οὐχὶ πεινῶν ἀναμενεῖς
δάκνων σεαυτὸν καὶ τὸν ἀπολογούμενον.

Φιλοκλέων

πῶς οὖν διαγιγνώσκειν καλῶς δυνήσομαι
ὥσπερ πρότερον τὰ πράγματ᾽ ἔτι μασώμενος; **Βδελυκλέων**

πολλῷ γ᾽ ἄμεινον: καὶ λέγεται γὰρ τουτογί,
ὡς οἱ δικασταὶ ψευδομένων τῶν μαρτύρων
μόλις τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ἔγνωσαν ἀναμασώμενοι.

Φιλοκλέων

ἀνά τό με πείθεις. ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ οὔπω λέγεις,
τὸν μισθὸν ὁπόθεν λήψομαι.

Βδελυκλέων
παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ.

Φιλοκλέων
καλῶς,
ὁτιὴ κατ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν κοὐ μεθ᾽ ἑτέρου λήψομαι.
αἴσχιστα γάρ τοί μ᾽ ἠργάσατο Λυσίστρατος
ὁ σκωπτόλης. δραχμὴν μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ πρώην λαβὼν
ἐλθὼν διεκερματίζετ᾽ ἐν τοῖς ἰχθύσιν,
κἄπειτ᾽ ἐνέθηκε τρεῖς λοπίδας μοι κεστρέων:
κἀγὼ ‘νέκαψ᾽: ὀβολοὺς γὰρ ᾠόμην λαβεῖν:
κᾆτα βδελυχθεὶς ὀσφρόμενος ἐξέπτυσα:

κᾆθ᾽ εἶλκον αὐτόν.

Βδελυκλέων
ὁ δὲ τί πρὸς ταῦτ᾽ εἶφ᾽;

Φιλοκλέων
ὅ τι;
ἀλεκτρυόνος μ᾽ ἔφασκε κοιλίαν ἔχειν:
795 ‘ταχὺ γοῦν καθέψεις τἀργύριον,’ ἦ δ᾽ ὃς λέγων.

Βδελυκλέων

ὁρᾷς ὅσον καὶ τοῦτο δῆτα κερδανεῖς.

Φιλοκλέων

οὐ πάνυ τι μικρόν. ἀλλ᾽ ὅπερ μέλλεις ποίει.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀνάμενέ νυν: ἐγὼ δὲ ταῦθ᾽ ἥξω φέρων.

Φιλοκλέων

ὅρα τὸ χρῆμα, τὰ λόγι᾽ ὡς περαίνεται.
800 ἠκηκόη γὰρ ὡς Ἀθηναῖοί ποτε
δικάσοιεν ἐπὶ ταῖς οἰκίαισι τὰς δίκας,
κἀν τοῖς προθύροις ἐνοικοδομήσοι πᾶς ἀνὴρ
αὐτῷ δικαστηρίδιον μικρὸν πάνυ,
ὥσπερ Ἑκάταιον, πανταχοῦ πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν.

Βδελυκλέων

805 ἰδού, τί ἔτ᾽ ἐρεῖς; ὡς ἅπαντ᾽ ἐγὼ φέρω
ὅσαπερ ἔφασκον, κἄτι πολλῷ πλείονα.
ἀμὶς μέν, ἢν οὐρητιάσῃς, αὐτηὶ
παρά σοι κρεμήσετ᾽ ἐγγὺς ἐπὶ τοῦ παττάλου.

Φιλοκλέων

σοφόν γε τουτὶ καὶ γέροντι πρόσφορον
ἐξηῦρες ἀτεχνῶς φάρμακον στραγγουρίας.

Βδελυκλέων

καὶ πῦρ γε τουτί: καὶ προσέστηκεν φακῆ
ῥοφεῖν, ἐὰν δέῃ τι.

Φιλοκλέων
τοῦτ᾽ αὖ δεξιόν:
κἂν γὰρ πυρέττω, τόν γε μισθὸν λήψομαι.
αὐτοῦ μένων γὰρ τὴν φακῆν ῥοφήσομαι.
ἀτὰρ τί τὸν ὄρνιν ὡς ἔμ᾽ ἐξηνέγκατε; **Βδελυκλέων**

ἵνα γ᾽, ἢν καθεύδῃς ἀπολογουμένου τινός,
ᾄδων ἄνωθεν ἐξεγείρῃ σ᾽ οὑτοσί.

Φιλοκλέων

ἓν ἔτι ποθῶ, τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἀρέσκει μοι.

Βδελυκλέων
τὸ τί;

Φιλοκλέων

θὴρᾷον εἴ πως ἐκκομίσαις τὸ τοῦ Λύκου.

Βδελυκλέων

πάρεστι τουτί, καὐτὸς ἄναξ οὑτοσί.

Φιλοκλέων

ὦ δέσποθ᾽ ἥρως ὡς χαλεπὸς ἄρ᾽ ἦσθ᾽ ἰδεῖν.

Βδελυκλέων

οἷόσπερ ἡμῖν φαίνεται Κλεώνυμος.

Φιλοκλέων

οὔκουν ἔχει γ᾽ οὐδ᾽ αὐτὸς ἥρως ὢν ὅπλα.

Βδελυκλέων

εἰ θᾶττον ἐκαθίζου σύ, θᾶττον ἂν δίκην
ἐκάλουν.

Φιλοκλέων
κάλει νυν, ὡς κάθημαι ‘γὼ πάλαι.

Βδελυκλέων

φέρε νυν τίν᾽ αὐτῷ πρῶτον εἰσαγάγω δίκην;
τί τίς κακὸν δέδρακε τῶν ἐν τῷκίᾳ;
ἡ Θρᾷττα προσκαύσασα πρώην τὴν χύτραν — **Φιλοκλέων**

ἐπίσχες οὗτος: ὡς ὀλίγου μ᾽ ἀπώλεσας.
ἄνευ δρυφάκτου τὴν δίκην μέλλεις καλεῖν,
ὃ πρῶτον ἡμῖν τῶν ἱερῶν ἐφαίνετο; **Βδελυκλέων**

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ πάρεστιν.

Φιλοκλέων
ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ δραμὼν
αὐτὸς κομιοῦμαι τό γε παραυτίκ᾽ ἔνδοθεν.

Βδελυκλέων

τί ποτε τὸ χρῆμ᾽; ὡς δεινὸν ἡ φιλοχωρία.

Σωσίας

βάλλ᾽ ἐς κόρακας. τοιουτονὶ τρέφειν κύνα.

Βδελυκλέων

τί δ᾽ ἔστιν ἐτεόν;

Σωσίας
οὐ γὰρ ὁ Λάβης ἀρτίως
ὁ κύων παράξας ἐς τὸν ἰπνὸν ὑφαρπάσας
τροφαλίδα τυροῦ Σικελικὴν κατεδήδοκεν; **Βδελυκλέων**

τοῦτ᾽ ἆρα πρῶτον τἀδίκημα τῷ πατρὶ
εἰσακτέον μοι: σὺ δὲ κατηγόρει παρών.

Σωσίας

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐκ ἔγωγ᾽: ἀλλ᾽ ἄτερός φησιν κύων
κατηγορήσειν, ἤν τις εἰσάγῃ γραφήν.

Βδελυκλέων

ἴθι νυν ἄγ᾽ αὐτῷ δεῦρο.

Σωσίας
ταῦτα χρὴ ποιεῖν.

Βδελυκλέων

τουτὶ τί ἔστι;

Φιλοκλέων
χοιροκομεῖον Ἑστίας.

Βδελυκλέων

εἶθ᾽ ἱεροσυλήσας φέρεις;

Φιλοκλέων
οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα
ἀφ᾽ Ἑστίας ἀρχόμενος ἐπιτρίψω τινά.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴσαγ᾽ ἀνύσας: ὡς ἐγὼ τιμᾶν βλέπω.

Βδελυκλέων

φέρε νυν ἐνέγκω τὰς σανίδας καὶ τὰς γραφάς.

Φιλοκλέων

οἴμοι διατρίβεις κἀπολεῖς τριψημερῶν:
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀλοκίζειν ἐδεόμην τὸ χωρίον.

Βδελυκλέων

ἰδού.

Φιλοκλέων
κάλει νυν.

Βδελυκλέων
ταῦτα δή. τίς οὐτοσὶ
ὁ πρῶτός ἐστιν;

Φιλοκλέων
ἐς κόρακας, ὡς ἄχθομαι
ὁτιὴ ‘πελαθόμην τοὺς καδίσκους ἐκφέρειν.

Βδελυκλέων

οὗτος σὺ ποῖ θεῖς;

Φιλοκλέων
ἐπὶ καδίσκους.

Βδελυκλέων
μη δαμῶς.
ἐγὼ γὰρ εἶχον τούσδε τοὺς ἀρυστίχους.

Φιλοκλέων

κάλλιστα τοίνυν: πάντα γὰρ πάρεστι νῷν
ὅσων δεόμεθα, πλήν γε δὴ τῆς κλεψύδρας.

Βδελυκλέων

ἡδὶ δὲ δὴ τίς ἐστιν; οὐχὶ κλεψύδρα;

Φιλοκλέων

εὖ γ᾽ ἐκπορίζεις αὐτὰ κἀπιχωρίως.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα πῦρ τις ἐξενεγκάτω
καὶ μυρρίνας καὶ τὸν λιβανωτὸν ἔνδοθεν,
ὅπως ἂν εὐξώμεσθα πρῶτα τοῖς θεοῖς.

Χορός

καὶ μὴν ἡμεῖς ἐπὶ ταῖς σπονδαῖς
καὶ ταῖς εὐχαῖς
φήμην ἀγαθὴν λέξομεν ὑμῖν,
ὅτι γενναίως ἐκ τοῦ πολέμου
καὶ τοῦ νείκους ξυνεβήτην. **Βδελυκλέων**

εὐφημία μὲν πρῶτα νῦν ὑπαρχέτω.

Χορός

ὦ Φοῖβ᾽ Ἄπολλον Πύθι᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ
τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ὃ μηχανᾶται
ἔμπροσθεν οὗτος τῶν θυρῶν,
ἅπασιν ἡμῖν ἁρμόσαι
παυσαμένοις πλάνων.
ἰήιε Παιάν.

Βδελυκλέων

ὦ δέσποτ᾽ ἄναξ γεῖτον ἀγυιεῦ προθύρου προπύλαιε,
δέξαι τελετὴν καινὴν ὦναξ, ἣν τῷ πατρὶ καινοτομοῦμεν,
παῦσόν τ᾽ αὐτοῦ τοῦτο τὸ λίαν στρυφνὸν καὶ πρίνινον ἦθος,
ἀντὶ σιραίου μέλιτος μικρὸν τῷ θυμιδίῳ παραμείξας:
ἤδη δ᾽ εἶναι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις
ἤπιον αὐτόν,
τοὺς φεύγοντάς τ᾽ ἐλεεῖν μᾶλλον
τῶν γραψαμένων
κἀπιδακρύειν ἀντιβολούντων,

καὶ παυσάμενον τῆς δυσκολίας
ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς
τὴν ἀκαλήφην ἀφελέσθαι. **Χορός**

ξυνευχόμεσθα ταὐτά σοι κἀπᾴδομεν
νέαισιν ἀρχαῖς ἕνεκα τῶν προλελεγμένων.
εὖνοι γάρ ἐσμεν ἐξ οὗ
τὸν δῆμον ᾐσθόμεσθά σου
φιλοῦντος ὡς οὐδεὶς ἀνὴρ
τῶν γε νεωτέρων.
ἰήιε Παιάν.

Βδελυκλέων

εἴ τις θύρασιν ἡλιαστής, εἰσίτω:
ὡς ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν λέγωσιν οὐκ ἐσφρήσομεν.

Φιλοκλέων

τίς ἦρ᾽ ὁ φεύγων;

Βδελυκλέων
οὗτος.

Φιλοκλέων
ὅσον ἀλώσεται.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀκούετ᾽ ἤδη τῆς γραφῆς. ἐγράψατο
κύων Κυδαθηναιεὺς Λάβητ᾽ Αἰξωνέα
τὸν τυρὸν ἀδικεῖν ὅτι μόνος κατήσθιεν
τὸν Σικελικόν. τίμημα κλῳὸς σύκινος.

Φιλοκλέων

θάνατος μὲν οὖν κύνειος, ἢν ἅπαξ ἁλῷ.

Βδελυκλέων

καὶ μὴν ὁ φεύγων οὑτοσὶ Λάβης πάρα.

Φιλοκλέων

ὦ μιαρὸς οὗτος: ὡς δὲ καὶ κλέπτον βλέπει,
οἷον σεσηρὼς ἐξαπατήσειν μ᾽ οἴεται.
ποῦ δ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὁ διώκων, ὁ Κυδαθηναιεὺς κύων; **Κύων**

αὖ αὖ.

Βδελυκλέων

πάρεστιν οὗτος.

Φιλοκλέων
ἕτερος οὗτος αὖ Λάβης.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀγαθός γ᾽ ὑλακτεῖν καὶ διαλείχειν τὰς χύτρας.
σίγα, κάθιζε: σὺ δ᾽ ἀναβὰς κατηγόρει.

Φιλοκλέων

φέρε νυν ἅμα τήνδ᾽ ἐγχεάμενος κἀγὼ ῥοφῶ.

Σωσίας

τῆς μὲν γραφῆς ἠκούσαθ᾽ ἣν ἐγραψάμην
ἄνδρες δικασταὶ τουτονί. δεινότατα γὰρ
ἔργων δέδρακε κἀμὲ καὶ τὸ ῥυππαπαῖ.
ἀποδρὰς γὰρ ἐς τὴν γωνίαν τυρὸν πολὺν
κατεσικέλιζε κἀνέπλητ᾽ ἐν τῷ σκότῳ — **Φιλοκλέων**

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ δῆλός ἐστ᾽: ἔμοιγέ τοι
τυροῦ κάκιστον ἀρτίως ἐνήρυγεν
ὁ βδελυρὸς οὗτος.

Σωσίας
κοὐ μετέδωκ᾽ αἰτοῦντί μοι.

καίτοι τίς ὑμᾶς εὖ ποιεῖν δυνήσεται,
ἢν μή τι κἀμοί τις προβάλλῃ τῷ κυνί; **Φιλοκλέων**

οὐδὲν μετέδωκεν οὐδὲ τῷ κοινῷ γ᾽ ἐμοί.
θερμὸς γὰρ ἀνὴρ οὐδὲν ἧττον τῆς φακῆς.

Βδελυκλέων

πρὸς τῶν θεῶν μὴ προκαταγίγνωσκ᾽ ὦ πάτερ,
πρὶν ἄν γ᾽ ἀκούσῃς ἀμφοτέρων.

Φιλοκλέων
ἀλλ᾽ ὦγαθὲ
τὸ πρᾶγμα φανερόν ἐστιν: αὐτὸ γὰρ βοᾷ.

Σωσίας

μή νυν ἀφῆτέ γ᾽ αὐτόν, ὡς ὄντ᾽ αὖ πολὺ
κυνῶν ἁπάντων ἄνδρα μονοφαγίστατον,
ὅστις περιπλεύσας τὴν θυείαν ἐν κύκλῳ
ἐκ τῶν πόλεων τὸ σκῖρον ἐξεδήδοκεν.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐμοὶ δέ γ᾽ οὐκ ἔστ᾽ οὐδὲ τὴν ὑδρίαν πλάσαι.

Σωσίας

πρὸς ταῦτα τοῦτον κολάσατ᾽: οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε
τρέφειν δύναιτ᾽ ἂν μία λόχμη κλέπτα δύο:
ἵνα μὴ κεκλάγγω διὰ κενῆς ἄλλως ἐγώ:
ἐὰν δὲ μή, τὸ λοιπὸν οὐ κεκλάγξομαι.

Φιλοκλέων

ἰοὺ ἰού.
ὅσας κατηγόρησε τὰς πανουργίας.
κλέπτον τὸ χρῆμα τἀνδρός: οὐ καὶ σοὶ δοκεῖ
ὦλεκτρυόν; νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἐπιμύει γέ τοι.
ὁ θεσμοθέτης: ποῦ ‘σθ᾽ οὗτος; ἀμίδα μοι δότω.

Βδελυκλέων

αὐτὸς καθελοῦ: τοὺς μάρτυρας γὰρ ἐσκαλῶ.
Λάβητι μάρτυρας παρεῖναι τρύβλιον
δοίδυκα τυρόκνηστιν ἐσχάραν χύτραν,
καὶ τἄλλα, τὰ σκεύη τὰ προσκεκαυμένα.
ἀλλ᾽ ἔτι σύ γ᾽ οὐρεῖς καὶ καθίζεις οὐδέπω; **Φιλοκλέων**

τοῦτον δέ γ᾽ οἶμ᾽ ἐγὼ χεσεῖσθαι τήμερον.

Βδελυκλέων

οὐκ αὖ σὺ παύσει χαλεπὸς ὢν καὶ δύσκολος,
καὶ ταῦτα τοῖς φεύγουσιν, ἀλλ᾽ ὀδὰξ ἔχει;
ἀνάβαιν᾽, ἀπολογοῦ. τί σεσιώπηκας; λέγε.

Φιλοκλέων

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔχειν οὗτός γ᾽ ἔοικεν ὅ τι λέγῃ.

Βδελυκλέων

οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖνό μοι δοκεῖ πεπονθέναι,
ὅπερ ποτὲ φεύγων ἔπαθε καὶ Θουκυδίδης:
ἀπόπληκτος ἐξαίφνης ἐγένετο τὰς γνάθους.
πάρεχ᾽ ἐκποδών. ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀπολογήσομαι.
χαλεπὸν μὲν ὦνδρες ἐστὶ διαβεβλημένου
ὑπεραποκρίνεσθαι κυνός, λέξω δ᾽ ὅμως.
ἀγαθὸς γάρ ἐστι καὶ διώκει τοὺς λύκους.

Φιλοκλέων

κλέπτης μὲν οὖν οὗτός γε καὶ ξυνωμότης.

Βδελυκλέων

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἄριστός ἐστι τῶν νυνὶ κυνῶν
οἷός τε πολλοῖς προβατίοις ἐφεστάναι.

Φιλοκλέων

τί οὖν ὄφελος, τὸν τυρὸν εἰ κατεσθίει;

Βδελυκλέων

ὅ τι; σοῦ προμάχεται καὶ φυλάττει τὴν θύραν
καὶ τἄλλ᾽ ἄριστός ἐστιν: εἰ δ᾽ ὑφείλετο,
ξύγγνωθι. κιθαρίζειν γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίσταται.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐβουλόμην ἂν οὐδὲ γράμματα,
ἵνα μὴ κακουργῶν ἐνέγραφ᾽ ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον.

Βδελυκλέων

ἄκουσον ὦ δαιμόνιέ μου τῶν μαρτύρων.
ἀνάβηθι τυρόκνηστι καὶ λέξον μέγα:
σὺ γὰρ ταμιεύουσ᾽ ἔτυχες. ἀπόκριναι σαφῶς,
εἰ μὴ κατέκνησας τοῖς στρατιώταις ἅλαβες.
φησὶ κατακνῆσαι.

Φιλοκλέων
νὴ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ ψεύδεται.

Βδελυκλέων

ὦ δαιμόνι᾽ ἐλέει ταλαιπωρουμένους.
οὗτος γὰρ ὁ Λάβης καὶ τραχήλι᾽ ἐσθίει
καὶ τὰς ἀκάνθας, κοὐδέποτ᾽ ἐν ταὐτῷ μένει.
ὁ δ᾽ ἕτερος οἷός ἐστιν οἰκουρὸς μόνον.
αὐτοῦ μένων γὰρ ἅττ᾽ ἂν εἴσω τις φέρῃ
τούτων μεταιτεῖ τὸ μέρος: εἰ δὲ μή, δάκνει.

Φιλοκλέων

αἰβοῖ. τί κακόν ποτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὅτῳ μαλάττομαι;
κακόν τι περιβαίνει με κἀναπείθομαι.

Βδελυκλέων

ἴθ᾽ ἀντιβολῶ σ᾽: οἰκτίρατ᾽ αὐτὸν ὦ πάτερε,
καὶ μὴ διαφθείρητε. ποῦ τὰ παιδία;
ἀναβαίνετ᾽ ὦ πόνηρα καὶ κνυζούμενα
αἰτεῖτε κἀντιβολεῖτε καὶ δακρύετε.

Φιλοκλέων

κατάβα κατάβα κατάβα κατάβα.

Βδελυκλέων
καταβήσομαι.
καίτοι τὸ κατάβα τοῦτο πολλοὺς δὴ πάνυ
ἐξηπάτηκεν. ἀτὰρ ὅμως καταβήσομαι.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐς κόρακας. ὡς οὐκ ἀγαθόν ἐστι τὸ ῥοφεῖν.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀπεδάκρυσα νῦν γνώμην ἐμὴν
οὐδέν ποτ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἢ τῆς φακῆς ἐμπλήμενος.

Βδελυκλέων

οὔκουν ἀποφεύγει δῆτα;

Φιλοκλέων
χαλεπὸν εἰδέναι.

Βδελυκλέων

ἴθ᾽ ὦ πατρίδιον ἐπὶ τὰ βελτίω τρέπου.
τηνδὶ λαβὼν τὴν ψῆφον ἐπὶ τὸν ὕστερον
μύσας παρᾷξον κἀπόλυσον ὦ πάτερ.

Φιλοκλέων

οὐ δῆτα: κιθαρίζειν γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι.

Βδελυκλέων

φέρε νύν σε τηδὶ τὴν ταχίστην περιάγω.

Φιλοκλέων

ὅδ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὁ πρότερος;

Βδελυκλέων
οὗτος:

Φιλοκλέων
αὕτη ‘νταῦθ᾽ ἔνι.

Βδελυκλέων

ἐξηπάτηται κἀπολέλυκεν οὐχ ἑκών.
φέρ᾽ ἐξεράσω.

Φιλοκλέων
πῶς ἄρ᾽ ἠγωνίσμεθα;

Βδελυκλέων

δείξειν ἔοικεν. ἐκπέφευγας ὦ Λάβης.
πάτερ πάτερ τί πέπονθας; οἴμοι: ποῦ ‘σθ᾽ ὕδωρ;
ἔπαιρε σαυτόν.

Φιλοκλέων
εἰπέ νυν ἐκεῖνό μοι,
ὄντως ἀπέφυγε;

Βδελυκλέων
νὴ Δί᾽:

Φιλοκλέων
οὐδέν εἰμ᾽ ἄρα.

Βδελυκλέων

μὴ φροντίσῃς ὦ δαιμόνι᾽: ἀλλ᾽ ἀνίστασο.

Φιλοκλέων

πῶς οὖν ἐμαυτῷ τοῦτ᾽ ἐγὼ ξυνείσομαι,
φεύγοντ᾽ ἀπολύσας ἄνδρα; τί ποτε πείσομαι;
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ πολυτίμητοι θεοὶ ξύγγνωτέ μοι:
ἄκων γὰρ αὖτ᾽ ἔδρασα κοὐ τοὐμοῦ τρόπου.

Βδελυκλέων

καὶ μηδὲν ἀγανάκτει γ᾽. ἐγὼ γάρ σ᾽ ὦ πάτερ
θρέψω καλῶς, ἄγων μετ᾽ ἐμαυτοῦ πανταχοῖ,
ἐπὶ δεῖπνον, ἐς ξυμπόσιον, ἐπὶ θεωρίαν,
ὥσθ᾽ ἡδέως διάγειν σε τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον:
κοὐκ ἐγχανεῖταί σ᾽ ἐξαπατῶν Ὑπέρβολος.
ἀλλ᾽ εἰσίωμεν.

Φιλοκλέων
ταῦτά νυν, εἴπερ δοκεῖ.

Χορός

ἀλλ᾽ ἴτε χαίροντες ὅποι βούλεσθ᾽.
ὑμεῖς δὲ τέως ὦ μυριάδες
ἀναρίθμητοι,
νῦν τὰ μέλλοντ᾽ εὖ λέγεσθαι
μὴ πέσῃ φαύλως χαμᾶζ᾽
εὐλαβεῖσθε.
τοῦτο γὰρ σκαιῶν θεατῶν
ἐστὶ πάσχειν, κοὐ πρὸς ὑμῶν. **Χορός**

νῦν αὖτε λεῳ προσέχετε τὸν νοῦν, εἴπερ καθαρόν τι φιλεῖτε.
μέμψασθαι γὰρ τοῖσι θεαταῖς ὁ ποιητὴς νῦν ἐπιθυμεῖ.
ἀδικεῖσθαι γάρ φησιν πρότερος πόλλ᾽ αὐτοὺς εὖ πεποιηκώς,
τὰ μὲν οὐ φανερῶς ἀλλ᾽ ἐπικουρῶν κρύβδην ἑτέροισι ποιηταῖς,
μιμησάμενος τὴν Εὐρυκλέους μαντείαν καὶ διάνοιαν,
εἰς ἀλλοτρίας γαστέρας ἐνδὺς κωμῳδικὰ πολλὰ χέασθαι:
μετὰ τοῦτο δὲ καὶ φανερῶς ἤδη κινδυνεύων καθ᾽ ἑαυτόν,
οὐκ ἀλλοτρίων ἀλλ᾽ οἰκείων Μουσῶν στόμαθ᾽ ἡνιοχήσας.
ἀρθεὶς δὲ μέγας καὶ τιμηθεὶς ὡς οὐδεὶς πώποτ᾽ ἐν ὑμῖν,
οὐκ † ἐκτελέσαι † φησὶν ἐπαρθεὶς οὐδ᾽ ὀγκῶσαι τὸ φρόνημα,
οὐδὲ παλαίστρας περικωμάζειν πειρῶν: οὐδ᾽ εἴ τις ἐραστὴς

κωμῳδεῖσθαι παιδίχ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ μισῶν ἔσπευσε πρὸς αὐτόν,
οὐδενὶ πώποτέ φησι πιθέσθαι, γνώμην τιν᾽ ἔχων ἐπιεικῆ,
ἵνα τὰς Μούσας αἶσιν χρῆται μὴ προαγωγοὺς ἀποφήνῃ.
οὐδ᾽ ὅτε πρῶτόν γ᾽ ἦρξε διδάσκειν, ἀνθρώποις φήσ᾽ ἐπιθέσθαι,
ἀλλ᾽ Ἡρακλέους ὀργήν τιν᾽ ἔχων τοῖσι μεγίστοις ἐπιχειρεῖν,
θρασέως ξυστὰς εὐθὺς ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς αὐτῷ τῷ καρχαρόδοντι,
οὗ δεινόταται μὲν ἀπ᾽ ὀφθαλμῶν Κύννης ἀκτῖνες ἔλαμπον,
ἑκατὸν δὲ κύκλῳ κεφαλαὶ κολάκων οἰμωξομένων ἐλιχμῶντο
περὶ τὴν κεφαλήν, φωνὴν δ᾽ εἶχεν χαράδρας ὄλεθρον τετοκυίας,
φώκης δ᾽ ὀσμήν, Λαμίας ὄρχεις ἀπλύτους, πρωκτὸν δὲ καμήλου.
τοιοῦτον ἰδὼν τέρας οὔ φησιν δείσας καταδωροδοκῆσαι,
ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἔτι καὶ νυνὶ πολεμεῖ: φησίν τε μετ᾽ αὐτὸν
τοῖς ἠπιάλοις ἐπιχειρῆσαι πέρυσιν καὶ τοῖς πυρετοῖσιν,
οἳ τοὺς πατέρας τ᾽ ἦγχον νύκτωρ καὶ τοὺς πάππους ἀπέπνιγον,
κατακλινόμενοί τ᾽ ἐπὶ ταῖς κοίταις ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ἀπράγμοσιν ὑμῶν
ἀντωμοσίας καὶ προσκλήσεις καὶ μαρτυρίας συνεκόλλων,
ὥστ᾽ ἀναπηδᾶν δειμαίνοντας πολλοὺς ὡς τὸν πολέμαρχον.
τοιόνδ᾽ εὑρόντες ἀλεξίκακον τῆς χώρας τῆσδε καθαρτήν,
πέρυσιν καταπροΰδοτε καινοτάταις σπείραντ᾽ αὐτὸν διανοίαις,
ἃς ὑπὸ τοῦ μὴ γνῶναι καθαρῶς ὑμεῖς ἐποιήσατ᾽ ἀναλδεῖς:
καίτοι σπένδων πόλλ᾽ ἐπὶ πολλοῖς ὄμνυσιν τὸν Διόνυσον
μὴ πώποτ᾽ ἀμείνον᾽ ἔπη τούτων κωμῳδικὰ μηδέν᾽ ἀκοῦσαι.
τοῦτο μὲν οὖν ἔσθ᾽ ὑμῖν αἰσχρὸν τοῖς μὴ γνοῦσιν παραχρῆμα,
ὁ δὲ ποιητὴς οὐδὲν χείρων παρὰ τοῖσι σοφοῖς νενόμισται,
εἰ παρελαύνων τοὺς ἀντιπάλους τὴν ἐπίνοιαν ξυνέτριψεν. **Χορός**

ἀλλὰ τὸ λοιπὸν τῶν ποιητῶν
ὦ δαιμόνιοι τοὺς ζητοῦντας
καινόν τι λέγειν κἀξευρίσκειν
στέργετε μᾶλλον καὶ θεραπεύετε,
καὶ τὰ νοήματα σῴζεσθ᾽ αὐτῶν,
ἐσβάλλετέ τ᾽ ἐς τὰς κιβωτοὺς
μετὰ τῶν μήλων. κἂν ταῦτα ποιῆθ᾽,
ὑμῖν δι᾽ ἔτους τῶν ἱματίων
ὀζήσει δεξιότητος. **Χορός**

ὦ πάλαι ποτ᾽ ὄντες ἡμεῖς ἄλκιμοι μὲν ἐν χοροῖς,
ἄλκιμοι δ᾽ ἐν μάχαις,
καὶ κατ᾽ αὐτὸ δὴ τοῦτο μόνον ἄνδρες ἀλκιμώτατοι:

πρίν ποτ᾽ ἦν πρὶν ταῦτα, νῦν δ᾽
οἴχεται, κύκνου τ᾽ ἔτι πολιώτεραι δὴ
αἵδ᾽ ἐπανθοῦσιν τρίχες.
ἀλλὰ κἀκ τῶν λειψάνων δεῖ
τῶνδε ῥώμην νεανικὴν σχεῖν:
ὡς ἐγὼ τοὐμὸν νομίζω
γῆρας εἶναι κρεῖττον ἢ πολλῶν
κικίννους νεανιῶν καὶ
σχῆμα κεὐρυπρωκτίαν. **Χορός**

εἴ τις ὑμῶν ᾧ θεαταὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ἰδὼν φύσιν
εἶτα θαυμάζει μ᾽ ὁρῶν μέσον διεσφηκωμένον,
ἥτις ἡμῶν ἐστὶν ἡ ‘πίνοια τῆς ἐγκεντρίδος,
ῥᾳδίως ἐγὼ διδάξω, κἂν ἄμουσος ᾖ τὸ πρίν.
ἐσμὲν ἡμεῖς, οἷς πρόσεστι τοῦτο τοὐρροπύγιον,
Ἀττικοὶ μόνοι δικαίως ἐγγενεῖς αὐτόχθονες,
ἀνδρικώτατον γένος καὶ πλεῖστα τήνδε τὴν πόλιν
ὠφελῆσαν ἐν μάχαισιν, ἡνίκ᾽ ἦλθ᾽ ὁ βάρβαρος,
τῷ καπνῷ τύφων ἅπασαν τὴν πόλιν καὶ πυρπολῶν,
ἐξελεῖν ἡμῶν μενοινῶν πρὸς βίαν τἀνθρήνια.
εὐθέως γὰρ ἐκδραμόντες ξὺν δορὶ ξὺν ἀσπίδι
ἐμαχόμεσθ᾽ αὐτοῖσι, θυμὸν ὀξίνην πεπωκότες,
στὰς ἀνὴρ παρ᾽ ἄνδρ᾽, ὑπ᾽ ὀργῆς τὴν χελύνην ἐσθίων:
ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν τοξευμάτων οὐκ ἦν ἰδεῖν τὸν οὐρανόν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως ἐωσάμεσθα ξὺν θεοῖς πρὸς ἑσπέραν.
γλαῦξ γὰρ ἡμῶν πρὶν μάχεσθαι τὸν στρατὸν διέπτετο:
εἶτα δ᾽ εἰπόμεσθα θυννάζοντες ἐς τοὺς θυλάκους,
οἱ δ᾽ ἔφευγον τὰς γνάθους καὶ τὰς ὀφρῦς κεντούμενοι:
ὥστε παρὰ τοῖς βαρβάροισι πανταχοῦ καὶ νῦν ἔτι
μηδὲν Ἀττικοῦ καλεῖσθαι σφηκὸς ἀνδρικώτερον. **Χορός**

ἆρα δεινὸς ἦ τόθ᾽ ὥστε πάντα μὴ δεδοικέναι,
καὶ κατεστρεψάμην
τοὺς ἐναντίους, πλέων ἐκεῖσε ταῖς τριήρεσιν;
οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἡμῖν ὅπως
ῥῆσιν εὖ λέξειν ἐμέλλομεν τότ᾽, οὐδὲ
συκοφαντήσειν τινὰ
φροντίς, ἀλλ᾽ ὅστις ἐρέτης ἔσοιτ᾽
ἄριστος. τοιγαροῦν πολλὰς

πόλεις Μήδων ἑλόντες
αἰτιώτατοι φέρεσθαι
τὸν φόρον δεῦρ᾽ ἐσμέν, ὃν κλέπτουσιν
οἱ νεώτεροι. **Χορός**

πολλαχοῦ σκοποῦντες ἡμᾶς εἰς ἅπανθ᾽ εὑρήσετε
τοὺς τρόπους καὶ τὴν δίαιταν σφηξὶν ἐμφερεστάτους.
πρῶτα μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἡμῶν ζῷον ἠρεθισμένον
μᾶλλον ὀξύθυμόν ἐστιν οὐδὲ δυσκολώτερον:
εἶτα τἄλλ᾽ ὅμοια πάντα σφηξὶ μηχανώμεθα.
ξυλλεγέντες γὰρ καθ᾽ ἑσμούς, ὡσπερεὶ τἀνθρήνια,
οἱ μὲν ἡμῶν οὗπερ ἄρχων, οἱ δὲ παρὰ τοὺς ἕνδεκα,
οἱ δ᾽ ἐν ᾠδείῳ δικάζουσ᾽, οἱ δὲ πρὸς τοῖς τειχίοις
ξυμβεβυσμένοι πυκνόν, νεύοντες ἐς τὴν γῆν, μόλις
ὥσπερ οἱ σκώληκες ἐν τοῖς κυττάροις κινούμενοι.
ἔς τε τὴν ἄλλην δίαιτάν ἐσμεν εὐπορώτατοι.
πάντα γὰρ κεντοῦμεν ἄνδρα κἀκπορίζομεν βίον.
ἀλλὰ γὰρ κηφῆνες ἡμῖν εἰσιν ἐγκαθήμενοι
οὐκ ἔχοντες κέντρον, οἳ μένοντες ἡμῶν τοῦ φόρου
τὸν πόνον κατεσθίουσιν, οὐ ταλαιπωρούμενοι.
τοῦτο δ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἄλγιστον ἡμῖν, ἤν τις ἀστράτευτος ὢν
ἐκροφῇ τὸν μισθὸν ἡμῶν, τῆσδε τῆς χώρας ὕπερ
μήτε κώπην μήτε λόγχην μήτε φλύκταιναν λαβών.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ τὸ λοιπὸν τῶν πολιτῶν ἔμβραχυ
ὅστις ἂν μὴ ‘χῃ τὸ κέντρον, μὴ φέρειν τριώβολον. **Φιλοκλέων**

οὗτοι ποτὲ ζῶν τοῦτον ἀποδυθήσομαι,
ἐπεὶ μόνος μ᾽ ἔσωσε παρατεταγμένον,
ὅθ᾽ ὁ βορέας ὁ μέγας ἐπεστρατεύσατο.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀγαθὸν ἔοικας οὐδὲν ἐπιθυμεῖν παθεῖν.

Φιλοκλέων

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ γὰρ οὐδαμῶς μοι ξύμφορον.
καὶ γὰρ πρότερον ἐπανθρακίδων ἐμπλήμενος
ἀπέδωκ᾽ ὀφείλων τῷ κναφεῖ τριώβολον.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀλλ᾽ οὖν πεπειράσθω γ᾽, ἐπειδήπερ γ᾽ ἄπαξ
ἐμοὶ σεαυτὸν παραδέδωκας εὖ ποιεῖν.

Φιλοκλέων

τί οὖν κελεύεις δρᾶν με;

Βδελυκλέων
τὸν τρίβων᾽ ἄφες,
τηνδὶ δὲ χλαῖναν ἀναβαλοῦ τριβωνικῶς.

Φιλοκλέων

ἔπειτα παῖδας χρὴ φυτεύειν καὶ τρέφειν,
ὅθ᾽ οὑτοσί με νῦν ἀποπνῖξαι βούλεται;

Βδελυκλέων

ἔχ᾽ ἀναβαλοῦ τηνδὶ λαβὼν καὶ μὴ λάλει.

Φιλοκλέων

τουτὶ τὸ κακὸν τί ἐστι πρὸς πάντων θεῶν;

Βδελυκλέων

οἱ μὲν καλοῦσι Περσίδ᾽ οἱ δὲ καυνάκην.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐγὼ δὲ σισύραν ᾠόμην Θυμαιτίδα.

Βδελυκλέων

κοὐ θαῦμά γ᾽: ἐς Σάρδεις γὰρ οὐκ ἐλήλυθας.
ἔγνως γὰρ ἄν: νῦν δ᾽ οὐχὶ γιγνώσκεις.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐγώ;
μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ τοίνυν: ἀτὰρ δοκεῖ γέ μοι
ἐοικέναι μάλιστα Μορύχου σάγματι.

Βδελυκλέων

οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν Ἐκβατάνοισι ταῦθ᾽ ὑφαίνεται.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐν Ἐκβατάνοισι γίγνεται κρόκης χόλιξ;

Βδελυκλέων

πόθεν ὦγάθ᾽; ἀλλὰ τοῦτο τοῖσι βαρβάροις
ὑφαίνεται πολλαῖς δαπάναις. αὕτη γέ τοι
ἐρίων τάλαντον καταπέπωκε ῥᾳδίως.

Φιλοκλέων

οὔκουν ἐριώλην δῆτ᾽ ἐχρῆν αὐτὴν καλεῖν
δικαιότερον ἢ καυνάκην;

Βδελυκλέων
ἔχ᾽ ὦγαθέ,
καὶ στῆθ᾽ ἀναμπισχόμενος.

Φιλοκλέων
οἴμοι δείλαιος:
ὡς θερμὸν ἡ μιαρά τί μου κατήρυγεν.

Βδελυκλέων

οὐκ ἀναβαλεῖ;

Φιλοκλέων
μὰ Δί᾽ οὐκ ἔγωγ᾽. ἀλλ᾽ ὦγαθέ,
εἴπερ γ᾽ ἀνάγκη, κρίβανόν μ᾽ ἀμπίσχετε.

Βδελυκλέων

φέρ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἐγώ σε περιβαλῶ: σὺ δ᾽ οὖν ἴθι.

Φιλοκλέων

παράθου γε μέντοι καὶ κρεάγραν.

Βδελυκλέων
τιὴ τί δή;

Φιλοκλέων

ἵν᾽ ἐξέλῃς με πρὶν διερρυηκέναι.

Βδελυκλέων

ἄγε νυν ὑπολύου τὰς καταράτους ἐμβάδας,
τασδὶ δ᾽ ἀνύσας † ὑπόδυθι † τὰς Λακωνικάς.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐγὼ γὰρ ἂν τλαίην ὑποδήσασθαί ποτε
ἐχθρῶν παρ᾽ ἀνδρῶν δυσμενῆ καττύματα; **Βδελυκλέων**

ἔνθες ποτ᾽ ὦ τᾶν κἀπόβαιν᾽ ἐρρωμένως
ἐς τὴν Λακωνικὴν ἀνύσας.

Φιλοκλέων
ἀκικεῖς γέ με
ἐς τὴν πολεμίαν ἀποβιβάζων τὸν πόδα.

Βδελυκλέων

φέρε καὶ τὸν ἕτερον.

Φιλοκλέων
μηδαμῶς τοῦτόν γ᾽, ἐπεὶ
πάνυ μισολάκων αὐτοῦ ‘στιν εἷς τῶν δακτύλων.

Βδελυκλέων

οὐκ ἔστι παρὰ ταῦτ᾽ ἄλλα.

Φιλοκλέων
κακοδαίμων ἐγώ,
ὅστις ἐπὶ γήρως χίμετλον οὐδὲν λήψομαι.

Βδελυκλέων

ἄνυσόν ποθ᾽ ὑποδησάμενος: εἶτα πλουσίως
ὠδὶ προβὰς τρυφερόν τι διασαλακώνισον.

Φιλοκλέων

ἰδού. θεῶ τὸ σχῆμα, καὶ σκέψαι μ᾽ ὅτῳ
μάλιστ᾽ ἔοικα τὴν βάδισιν τῶν πλουσίων.

Βδελυκλέων

ὅτῳ; Δοθιῆνι σκόροδον ἠμφιεσμένῳ.

Φιλοκλέων

καὶ μὴν προθυμοῦμαί γε σαυλοπρωκτιᾶν.

Βδελυκλέων

ἄγε νυν, ἐπιστήσει λόγους σεμνοὺς λέγειν
ἀνδρῶν παρόντων πολυμαθῶν καὶ δεξιῶν; **Φιλοκλέων**

ἔγωγε.

Βδελυκλέων
τίνα δῆτ᾽ ἂν λέγοις;

Φιλοκλέων
πολλοὺς πάνυ.
πρῶτον μὲν ὡς ἡ Λάμι᾽ ἁλοῦσ᾽ ἐπέρδετο,
ἔπειτα δ᾽ ὡς ὁ Καρδοπίων τὴν μητέρα.

Βδελυκλέων

μή ‘μοί γε μύθους, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων,
οἵους λέγομεν μάλιστα τοὺς κατ᾽ οἰκίαν.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐγῷδα τοίνυν τῶν γε πάνυ κατ᾽ οἰκίαν
ἐκεῖνον ὡς ‘οὕτω ποτ᾽ ἦν μῦς καὶ γαλῆ.’

Βδελυκλέων

ὦ σκαιὲ κἀπαίδευτε, Θεογένης ἔφη
τῷ κοπρολόγῳ καὶ ταῦτα λοιδορούμενος,
μῦς καὶ γαλᾶς μέλλεις λέγειν ἐν ἀνδράσιν; **Φιλοκλέων**

ποίους τινὰς δὲ χρὴ λέγειν;

Βδελυκλέων
μεγαλοπρεπεῖς,
ὡς ξυνεθεώρεις Ἀνδροκλεῖ καὶ Κλεισθένει.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐγὼ δὲ τεθεώρηκα ποώποτ᾽ οὐδαμοῖ
πλὴν ἐς Πάρον, καὶ ταῦτα δὔ ὀβολὼ φέρων.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀλλ᾽ οὖν λέγειν χρή σ᾽ ὡς ἐμάχετό γ᾽ αὐτίκα
Ἐφουδίων παγκράτιον Ἀσκώνδᾳ καλῶς,
ἤδη γέρων ὢν καὶ πολιός, ἔχων δέ τοι
πλευρὰν βαθυτάτην καὶ χέρας καὶ λαγόνα καὶ
θώρακ᾽ ἄριστον.

Φιλοκλέων
παῦε παῦ᾽, οὐδὲν λέγεις.
πῶς ἂν μαχέσαιτο παγκράτιον θώρακ᾽ ἔχων; **Βδελυκλέων**

οὕτω διηγεῖσθαι νομίζουσ᾽ οἱ σοφοί.
ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερον εἰπέ μοι: παρ᾽ ἀνδράσι ξένοις
πίνων σεαυτοῦ ποῖον ἂν λέξαι δοκεῖς

ἐπὶ νεότητος ἔργον ἀνδρικώτατον; **Φιλοκλέων**

ἐκεῖν᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ ἀνδρειότατόν γε τῶν ἐμῶν,
ὅτ᾽ Ἐργασίωνος τὰς χάρακας ὑφειλόμην.

Βδελυκλέων

ἀπολεῖς με. ποίας χάρακας; ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἢ κάπρον
ἐδιώκαθές ποτ᾽ ἢ λαγών, ἢ λαμπάδα
ἔδραμες, ἀνευρὼν ὅ τι νεανικώτατον.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐγᾦδα τοίνυν τό γε νεανικώτατον:
ὅτε τὸν δρομέα Φάυλλον ὢν βούπαις ἔτι
εἷλον διώκων λοιδορίας ψήφοιν δυοῖν.

Βδελυκλέων

παῦ: ἀλλὰ δευρὶ κατακλινεὶς προσμάνθανε
ξυμποτικὸς εἶναι καὶ ξυνουσιαστικός.

Φιλοκλέων

πῶς οὖν κατακλινῶ; φράζ᾽ ἀνύσας.

Βδελυκλέων
εὐσχημόνως.

Φιλοκλέων

ὡδὶ κελεύεις κατακλινῆναι;

Βδελυκλέων
μηδαμῶς.

Φιλοκλέων

πῶς δαί;

Βδελυκλέων
τὰ γόνατ᾽ ἔκτεινε καὶ γυμναστικῶς
ὑγρὸν χύτλασον σεαυτὸν ἐν τοῖς στρώμασιν.
ἔπειτ᾽ ἐπαίνεσόν τι τῶν χαλκωμάτων,
ὀροφὴν θέασαι, κρεκάδι᾽ αὐλῆς θαύμασον:
ὕδωρ κατὰ χειρός: τὰς τραπέζας ἐσφέρειν:
δειπνοῦμεν: ἀπονενίμμεθ᾽: ἤδη σπένδομεν.

Φιλοκλέων

πρὸς τῶν θεῶν ἐνύπνιον ἐστιώμεθα;

Βδελυκλέων

αὐλητρὶς ἐνεφύσησεν: οἱ δὲ συμπόται
εἰσὶν Θέωρος Αἰσχίνης Φᾶνος Κλέων,
ξένος τις ἕτερος πρὸς κεφαλῆς Ἀκέστορος.
τούτοις ξυνὼν τὰ σκόλι᾽ ὅπως δέξει καλῶς.

Φιλοκλέων

ἄληθες; ὡς οὐδεὶς Διακρίων δέξεται.

Βδελυκλέων

ἐγὼ εἴσομαι: καὶ δὴ γάρ εἰμ᾽ ἐγὼ Κλέων,
ᾄδω δὲ πρῶτος Ἁρμοδίου: δέξαι δὲ σύ.
‘οὐδεὶς πώποτ᾽ ἀνὴρ ἔγεντ᾽ Ἀθήναις’ — **Φιλοκλέων**

οὐχ οὕτω γε πανοῦργος οὐδὲ κλέπτης.

Βδελυκλέων

τουτὶ σὺ δράσεις; παραπολεῖ βοώμενος:
φήσει γὰρ ἐξολεῖν σε καὶ διαφθερεῖν
καὶ τῆσδε τῆς γῆς ἐξελᾶν.

Φιλοκλέων
ἐγὼ δέ γε,
ἐὰν ἀπειλῇ, νὴ Δί᾽ ἕτερ᾽ ἀντᾴσομαι: **Φιλοκλέων**

‘ὦνθρωφ’, οὗτος ὁ μαιόμενος τὸ μέγα κράτος,
ἀντρέψεις ἔτι τὰν πόλιν: ἁ δ’ ἔχεται ῥοπᾶς.’

Βδελυκλέων

τί δ’ ὅταν Θέωρος πρὸς ποδῶν κατακείμενος
ᾄδῃ Κλέωνος λαβόμενος τῆς δεξιᾶς:

Βδελυκλέων

‘Ἀδμήτου λόγον ὦταῖρε μαθὼν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς φίλει.’

Βδελυκλέων

τούτῳ τί λέξεις σκόλιον;

Φιλοκλέων
ᾠδικῶς ἐγώ.

Φιλοκλέων

‘οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλωπεκίζειν,
οὐδ’ ἀμφοτέροισι γίγνεσθαι φίλον.’

Βδελυκλέων

μετὰ τοῦτον Αἰσχίνης ὁ Σέλλου δέξεται,
ἀνὴρ σοφὸς καὶ μουσικός, κᾆτ’ ᾄσεται:

Βδελυκλέων

‘χρήματα καὶ βίαν
Κλειταγόρᾳ τε κἀμοὶ
μετὰ Θετταλῶν’ — **Φιλοκλέων**

πολλὰ δὴ διεκόμπασας σὺ κἀγώ.

Βδελυκλέων

τουτὶ μὲν ἐπιεικῶς σύ γ’ ἐξεπίστασαι:

ὅπως δ᾽ ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἐς Φιλοκτήμονος ἴμεν.
παῖ παῖ, τὸ δεῖπνον Χρυσὲ συσκεύαζε νῷν,
ἵνα καὶ μεθυσθῶμεν διὰ χρόνου.

Φιλοκλέων

μηδαμῶς.
κακὸν τὸ πίνειν: ἀπὸ γὰρ οἴνου γίγνεται
καὶ θυροκοπῆσαι καὶ πατάξαι καὶ βαλεῖν,
κἄπειτ᾽ ἀποτίνειν ἀργύριον ἐκ κραιπάλης.

Βδελυκλέων

οὔκ, ἢν ξυνῇς γ᾽ ἀνδράσι καλοῖς τε κἀγαθοῖς.
ἢ γὰρ παρῃτήσαντο τὸν πεπονθότα,
ἢ λόγον ἔλεξας αὐτὸς ἀστεῖόν τινα,
Αἰσωπικὸν γέλοιον ἢ Συβαριτικόν,
ὧν ἔμαθες ἐν τῷ συμποσίῳ: κᾆτ᾽ ἐς γέλων
τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ἔτρεψας, ὥστ᾽ ἀφείς σ᾽ ἀποιχεται.

Φιλοκλέων

μαθητέον τἄρ᾽ ἐστὶ πολλοὺς τῶν λόγων,
εἴπερ ἀποτείσω μηδέν, ἤν τι δρῶ κακόν.

Βδελυκλέων

ἄγε νυν ἴωμεν: μηδὲν ἡμᾶς ἰσχέτω.

Χορός

πολλάκις δὴ ‘δοξ᾽ ἐμαυτῷ δεξιὸς πεφυκέναι
καὶ σκαιὸς οὐδεπώποτε:
ἀλλ᾽ Ἀμυνίας ὁ Σέλλου μᾶλλον οὐκ τῶν Κρωβύλων,
οὗτος ὅν γ᾽ ἐγώ ποτ᾽ εἶδον ἀντὶ μήλου καὶ ῥοᾶς
δειπνοῦντα μετὰ Λεωγόρου:
πεινῇ γὰρ ἧπερ Ἀντιφῶν:
ἀλλὰ πρεσβεύων γὰρ ἐς Φάρσαλον ᾤχετ᾽, εἶτ᾽ ἐκεῖ
μόνος μόνοις
τοῖς Πενέσταισι ξυνῆν τοῖς
Θετταλῶν, αὐτὸς πενέστης ὢν ἔλαττων οὐδενός.

Χορός

ὦ μακάρι᾽ Αὐτόμενες ὥς σε μακαρίζομεν,
παῖδας ἐφύτευσας ὅτι χειροτεχνικωτάτους:
πρῶτα μὲν ἅπασι φίλον ἄνδρα τε σοφώτατον,
τὸν κιφαραοιδότατον, ᾧ χάρις ἐφέσπετο:
τὸν δ᾽ ὑποκριτὴν ἕτερον ἀργαλέον ὡς σοφόν:
εἶτ᾽ Ἀριφράδην πολύ τι θυμοσοφικώτατον,
ὄντινά ποτ᾽ ὤμοσε μαθόντα παρὰ μηδενός,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀπὸ σοφῆς φύσεος αὐτόματον ἐκμαθεῖν
γλωττοποιεῖν ἐς τὰ πορνεῖ᾽ εἰσιόνθ᾽ ἑκάστοτε.

Χορός

εἰσί τινες οἵ μ᾽ ἔλεγον ὡς καταδιηλλάγην,
ἡνίκα Κλέων μ᾽ ὑπετάραττεν ἐπικείμενος
† καί με κακίσταις † ἔκνισε: κᾆθ᾽ ὅτ᾽ ἀπεδειρόμην,
οὐκτὸς ἐγέλων μέγα κεκραγότα θεώμενοι,
οὐδὲν ἄρ᾽ ἐμοῦ μέλον, ὅσον δὲ μόνον εἰδέναι
σκωμμάτιον εἴποτέ τι θλιβόμενος ἐκβαλῶ.
ταῦτα κατιδὼν ὑπό τι μικρὸν ἐπιθήκισα:
εἶτα νῦν ἐξηπάτησεν ἡ χάραξ τὴν ἄμπελον. **Ξανθίας**

ἰὼ χελῶναι μακάριαι τοῦ δέρματος,
καὶ τρὶς μακάριαι τοῦ ‘πὶ ταῖς πλευραῖς τέγους.
ὡς εὖ κατηρέψασθε καὶ νουβυστικῶς
κεράμῳ τὸ νῶτον ὥστε τὰς πληγὰς στέγειν.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀπόλωλα στιζόμενος βακτηρίᾳ.

Χορός

τί δ᾽ ἔστιν ὦ παῖ; παῖδα γάρ, κἂν ᾖ γέρων,
καλεῖν δίκαιον ὅστις ἂν πληγὰς λάβῃ.

Ξανθίας

οὐ γὰρ ὁ γέρων ἀτηρότατον ἄρ᾽ ἦν κακὸν
καὶ τῶν ξυνόντων πολὺ παροινικώτατος;
καίτοι παρῆν Ἵππυλλος Ἀντιφῶν Λύκων

Λυσίστρατος Θούφραστος οἱ περὶ Φρύνιχον.
τούτων ἁπάντων ἦν ὑβριστότατος μακρῷ.
εὐθὺς γὰρ ὡς ἐνέπλητο πολλῶν κἀγαθῶν,
ἐνήλατ᾽ ἐσκίρτα ‘πεπόρδει κατεγέλα
ὥσπερ καχρύων ὀνίδιον εὐωχημένον
κἄτυπτεν ἐμὲ νεανικῶς ‘παῖ παῖ᾽ καλῶν.
εἶτ᾽ αὐτὸν ὡς εἶδ᾽ ἤκασεν Λυσίστρατος:
‘ἔοικας ὦ πρεσβῦτα νεοπλούτῳ τρυγὶ
κλητῆρί τ᾽ εἰς ἀχυρμὸν ἀποδεδρακότι.’
ὁ δ᾽ ἀνακραγὼν ἀντήκασ᾽ αὐτὸν πάρνοπι
τὰ θρῖα τοῦ τρίβωνος ἀποβεβληκότι,
Σθενέλῳ τε τὰ σκευάρια διακεκαρμένῳ.
οἱ δ᾽ ἀνεκρότησαν, πλήν γε Θουφράστου μόνου:
οὗτος δὲ διεμύλλαινεν ὡς δὴ δεξιός.
ὁ γέρων δὲ τὸν Θούφραστον ἤρετ᾽: ‘εἰπέ μοι,
ἐπὶ τῷ κομᾶς καὶ κομψὸς εἶναι προσποιεῖ,
κωμῳδολοιχῶν περὶ τὸν εὖ πράττοντ᾽ ἀεί;’
τοιαῦτα περιύβριζεν αὐτοὺς ἐν μέρει,
σκώπτων ἀγροίκως καὶ προσέτι λόγους λέγων
ἀμαθέστατ᾽ οὐδὲν εἰκότας τῷ πράγματι.
ἔπειτ᾽ ἐπειδὴ ‘μέθυεν, οἴκαδ᾽ ἔρχεται
τύπτων ἅπαντας, ἤν τις αὐτῷ ξυντύχῃ.
ὁδὶ δὲ καὶ δὴ σφαλλόμενος προσέρχεται.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκποδὼν ἄπειμι πρὶν πληγὰς λαβεῖν.

Φιλοκλέων

ἄνεχε πάρεχε:
κλαύσεταί τις τῶν ὄπισθεν
ἐπακολουθούντων ἐμοί:
οἷον, εἰ μὴ ‘ρρήσεθ᾽, ὑμᾶς
ὦ πόνηροι ταυτῃὶ τῇ
δᾳδὶ φρυκτοὺς σκευάσω.

Ξυμότης τις

ἦ μὴν σὺ δώσεις αὖριον τούτων δίκην
ἡμῖν ἅπασι, κεἰ σφόδρ᾽ εἶ νεανίας.
ἀθρόοι γὰρ ἥξομέν σε προσκαλούμενοι.

Φιλοκλέων

ἰὴ ἰεῦ, καλούμενοι.
ἀρχαῖά γ᾽ ὑμῶν: ἆρά γ᾽ ἴσθ᾽
ὡς οὐδ᾽ ἀκούων ἀνέχομαι
δικῶν; ἰαιβοῖ, αἰβοῖ.
τάδε μ᾽ ἀρέσκει: βάλλε κημούς.
οὐκ ἄπεισι; ποῦ ‘στιν ἡμῖν
ἡλιαστής; ἐκποδών. **Φιλοκλέων**

ἀνάβαινε δεῦρο χρυσομηλολόνθιον,
τῇ χειρὶ τουδὶ λαβομένη τοῦ σχοινίου.
ἔχου: φυλάττου δ᾽, ὡς σαπρὸν τὸ σχοινίον:
ὅμως γε μέντοι τριβόμενον οὐκ ἄχθεται.
ὁρᾷς ἐγώ σ᾽ ὡς δεξιῶς ὑφειλόμην
μέλλουσαν ἤδη λεσβιᾶν τοὺς ξυμπότας:
ὧν οὕνεκ᾽ ἀπόδος τῷ πέει τῳδὶ χάριν.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἀποδώσεις οὐδ᾽ ἐφιαλεῖς οἶδ᾽ ὅτι,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐξαπατήσεις κἀγχανεῖ τούτῳ μέγα:
πολλοῖς γὰρ ἤδη χἀτέροις αὖτ᾽ ἠργάσω.
ἐὰν γένῃ δὲ μὴ κακὴ νυνὶ γυνή,
ἐγώ σ᾽ ἐπειδὰν οὑμὸς υἱὸς ἀποθάνῃ,
λυσάμενος ἔξω παλλακὴν ὦ χοιρίον.
νῦν δ᾽ οὐ κρατῶ ‘γὼ τῶν ἐμαυτοῦ χρημάτων
νέος γάρ εἰμι καὶ φυλάττομαι σφόδρα.
τὸ γὰρ υἴδιον τηρεῖ με, κἄστι δύσκολον
κἄλλως κυμινοπριστοκαρδαμογλύφον.
ταῦτ᾽ οὖν περί μου δέδοικε μὴ διαφθαρῶ.
πατὴρ γὰρ οὐδείς ἐστιν αὐτῷ πλὴν ἐμοῦ.
ὀδὶ δὲ καὐτὸς ἐπὶ σὲ κἄμ᾽ ἔοικε θεῖν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα στῆθι τάσδε τὰς δετὰς
λαβοῦσ᾽, ἵν᾽ αὐτὸν τωθάσω νεανικῶς,
οἵοις ποθ᾽ οὗτος ἐμὲ πρὸ τῶν μυστηρίων.

Βδελυκλέων

ὦ οὗτος οὗτος τυφεδανὲ καὶ χοιρόθλιψ,
ποθεῖν ἐρᾶν τ᾽ ἔοικας ὡραίας σοροῦ.
οὗτοι καταπροίξει μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω τοῦτο δρῶν.

Φιλοκλέων

ὡς ἡδέως φάγοις ἂν ἐξ ὄξους δίκην.

Βδελυκλέων

οὐ δεινὰ τωθάζειν σε τὴν αὐλητρίδα
τῶν ξυμποτῶν κλέψαντα;

Φιλοκλέων
ποίαν αὐλητρίδα;
τί ταῦτα ληρεῖς ὥσπερ ἀπὸ τύμβου πεσών; **Βδελυκλέων**

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ αὕτη πού ‘στί σοί γ᾽ ἡ Δαρδανίς.

Φιλοκλέων

οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ἀγορᾷ τοῖς θεοῖς δᾳὰς κάεται.

Βδελυκλέων

δᾳὰς ἥδε;

Φιλοκλέων
δᾳὰς δῆτ᾽. οὐχ ὁρᾷς ἐστιγμένην;

Βδελυκλέων

τί δὲ τὸ μέλαν τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶν αὐτῆς τοὐν μέσῳ;

Φιλοκλέων

ἡ πίττα δήπου καομένης ἐξέρχεται.

Βδελυκλέων

ὁ δ᾽ ὄπισθεν οὐχὶ πρωκτός ἐστιν οὑτοσί;

Φιλοκλέων

ὄζος μὲν οὖν τῆς δᾳδὸς οὗτος ἐξέχει.

Βδελυκλέων

τί λέγεις σύ; ποῖος ὄζος; οὐκ εἶ δεῦρο σύ;

Φιλοκλέων

ἆ ἆ τί μέλλεις δρᾶν;

Βδελυκλέων
ἄγειν ταύτην λαβὼν
ἀφελόμενός σε καὶ νομίσας εἶναι σαπρὸν
κοὐδὲν δύνασθαι δρᾶν.

Φιλοκλέων
ἄκουσόν νυν ἐμοῦ.
Ὀλυμπίασιν, ἡνίκ᾽ ἐθεώρουν ἐγώ,
Ἐφουδίων ἐμαχέσατ᾽ Ἀσκώνδᾳ καλῶς
ἤδη γέρων ὤν: εἶτα τῇ πυγμῇ θενὼν
ὁ πρεσβύτερος κατέβαλε τὸν νεώτερον.
πρὸς ταῦτα τηροῦ μὴ λάβῃς ὑπώπια.

Βδελυκλέων

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἐξέμαθές γε τὴν Ὀλυμπίαν.

Αρτόπωλις

ἴθι μοι παράστηθ᾽, ἀντιβολῶ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν.
ὁδὶ γὰρ ἀνήρ ἐστιν ὅς μ᾽ ἀπώλεσεν
τῇ δᾳδὶ παίων, κἀξέβαλεν ἐντευθενὶ
ἄρτους δέκ᾽ ὀβολῶν κἀπιθήκην τέτταρας.

Βδελυκλέων

ὁρᾷς ἃ δέδρακας; πράγματ᾽ αὖ δεῖ καὶ δίκας
ἔχειν διὰ τὸν σὸν οἶνον.

Φιλοκλέων
οὐδαμῶς γ᾽, ἐπεὶ
λόγοι διαλλάξουσιν αὐτὰ δεξιοί:

ὥστ᾽ οἶδ᾽ ὁτιὴ ταύτῃ διαλλαχθήσομαι.

Αρτόπωλις

οὗτοι μὰ τὼ θεὼ καταπροίξει Μυρτίας
τῆς Ἀγκυλίωνος θυγατέρος καὶ Σωστράτης,
οὕτω διαφθείρας ἐμοῦ τὰ φορτία.

Φιλοκλέων

ἄκουσον ὦ γύναι: λόγον σοι βούλομαι
λέξαι χαρίεντα.

Αρτόπωλις
μὰ Δία μὴ ‘μοί γ᾽ ὦ μέλε.

Φιλοκλέων

Αἴσωπον ἀπὸ δείπνου βαδίζονθ᾽ ἑσπέρας
θρασεῖα καὶ μεθύση τις ὑλάκτει κύων.
κἄπειτ᾽ ἐκεῖνος εἶπεν, ‘ὦ κύον κύον,
εἰ νὴ Δί᾽ ἀντὶ τῆς κακῆς γλώττης ποθὲν
πυροὺς πρίαιο, σωφρονεῖν ἄν μοι δοκεῖς.’

Αρτόπωλις

καὶ καταγελᾷς μου; προσκαλοῦμαί σ᾽ ὅστις εἶ
πρὸς τοὺς ἀγορανόμους βλάβης τῶν φορτίων,
κλητῆρ᾽ ἔχουσα Χαιρεφῶντα τουτονί.

Φιλοκλέων

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἄκουσον, ἢν τί σοι δόξω λέγειν.
Λᾶσός ποτ᾽ ἀντεδίδασκε καὶ Σιμωνίδης:
ἔπειθ᾽ ὁ Λᾶσος εἶπεν, ‘ὀλίγον μοι μέλει.’

Αρτόπωλις

ἄληθες οὗτος;

Φιλοκλέων
καὶ σὺ δή μοι Χαιρεφῶν
γυναικὶ † κλητεύειν ἐοικὼς † θαψίνῃ,
Ἰνοῖ κρεμαμένῃ πρὸς ποδῶν Εὐριπίδου.

Βδελυκλέων

ὁδί τις ἕτερος, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἔρχεται
καλούμενός σε: τόν γέ τοι κλητῆρ᾽ ἔχει.

Κατήγορος

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων. προσκαλοῦμαί σ᾽ ὦ γέρον
ὕβρεως.

Βδελυκλέων
ὕβρεως; μὴ μὴ καλέσῃ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν:
ἐγὼ γὰρ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ δίκην δίδωμί σοι
ἣν ἂν σὺ τάξῃς, καὶ χάριν προσείσομαι.

Φιλοκλέων

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν αὐτῷ διαλλαχθήσομαι
ἑκών: ὁμολογῶ γὰρ πατάξαι καὶ βαλεῖν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐλθὲ δευρί: πότερον ἐπιτρέπεις ἐμοί,
ὅ τι χρή μ᾽ ἀποτείσαντ᾽ ἀργύριον τοῦ πράγματος
εἶναι φίλον τὸ λοιπόν, ἢ σύ μοι φράσεις; **Κατήγορος**

σὺ λέγε. δικῶν γὰρ οὐ δέομ᾽ οὐδὲ πραγμάτων.

Φιλοκλέων

ἀνὴρ Συβαρίτης ἐξέπεσεν ἐξ ἅρματος,
καί πως κατεάγη τῆς κεφαλῆς μέγα σφόδρα:
ἐτύγχανεν γὰρ οὐ τρίβων ὢν ἱππικῆς.
κἄπειτ᾽ ἐπιστὰς εἶπ᾽ ἀνὴρ αὐτῷ φίλος:
‘ἔρδοι τις ἣν ἕκαστος εἰδείη τέχνην.’
οὕτω δὲ καὶ σὺ παράτρεχ᾽ ἐς τὰ Πιττάλου.

Βδελυκλέων

οὔμοιά σου καὶ ταῦτα τοῖς ἄλλοις τρόποις.

Κατήγορος

ἀλλ᾽ οὖν σὺ μέμνησ᾽ αὐτὸς ἀπεκρίνατο.

Φιλοκλέων

ἄκουε, μὴ φεῦγ᾽. ἐν Συβάρει γυνή ποτε
κατέαξ᾽ ἐχῖνον.

Κατήγορος
ταῦτ᾽ ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι.

Φιλοκλέων

οὐχῖνος οὖν ἔχων τιν᾽ ἐπεμαρτύρατο:
εἶθ᾽ ἡ Συβαρῖτις εἶπεν, ‘εἰ ναὶ τὰν κόραν
τὴν μαρτυρίαν ταύτην ἐάσας ἐν τάχει
ἐπίδεσμον ἐπρίω, νοῦν ἂν εἶχες πλείονα.’

Κατήγορος

ὕβριζ᾽ ἕως ἂν τὴν δίκην ἄρχων καλῇ.

Βδελυκλέων

οὗτοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἐνταυθοῖ μενεῖς,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀράμενος οἴσω σε —

Φιλοκλέων
τί ποιεῖς;

Βδελυκλέων
ὅ τι ποιῶ;
εἴσω φέρω σ᾽ ἐντεῦθεν: εἰ δὲ μή, τάχα
κλητῆρες ἐπιλείψουσι τοὺς καλουμένους.

Φιλοκλέων

Αἴσωπον οἱ Δελφοί ποτ᾽ —

Βδελυκλέων
ὀλίγον μοι μέλει.

Φιλοκλέων

φιάλην ἐπῃτιῶντο κλέψαι τοῦ θεοῦ:
ὁ δ᾽ ἔλεξεν αὐτοῖς, ὡς ὁ κάνθαρός ποτε —

Βδελυκλέων

οἴμ᾽ ὡς ἀπολῶ σ᾽ αὐτοῖσι τοῖσι κανθάροις.

Χορός

ζηλῶ γε τῆς εὐτυχίας
τὸν πρέσβυν οἷ μετέστη
ξηρῶν τρόπων καὶ βιοτῆς:
ἕτερα δὲ νῦν ἀντιμαθὼν
ἦ μέγα τι μεταπεσεῖται
ἐπὶ τὸ τρυφῶν καὶ μαλακόν.
τάχα δ᾽ ἂν ἴσως οὐκ ἐθέλοι.
τὸ γὰρ ἀποστῆναι χαλεπὸν
φύσεος, ἣν ἔχοι τις ἀεί.
καίτοι πολλοὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἔπαθον:
ξυνόντες γνώμαις ἑτέρων
μετεβάλοντο τοὺς τρόπους. **Χορός**

πολλοῦ δ᾽ ἐπαίνου παρ᾽ ἐμοὶ
καὶ τοῖσιν εὖ φρονοῦσιν
τυχὼν ἄπεισιν διὰ τὴν
φιλοπατρίαν καὶ σοφίαν
ὁ παῖς ὁ Φιλοκλέωνος.
οὐδενὶ γὰρ οὕτως ἀγανῷ
ξυνεγενόμην, οὐδὲ τρόποις
ἐπεμάνην οὐδ᾽ ἐξεχύθην.
τί γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ἀντιλέγων
οὐ κρείττων ἦν, βουλόμενος

τὸν φύσαντα σεμνοτέροις
κατακοσμῆσαι πράγμασιν; **Ξανθίας**

νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον ἄπορά γ᾽ ἡμῖν πράγματα
δαίμων τις ἐσκεκύκληκεν ἐς τὴν οἰκίαν.
ὁ γὰρ γέρων ὡς ἔπιε διὰ πολλοῦ χρόνου
ἤκουσέ τ᾽ αὐλοῦ, περιχαρὴς τῷ πράγματι
ὀρχούμενος τῆς νυκτὸς οὐδὲν παύεται
τἀρχαῖ ἐκεῖν᾽ οἷς Θέσπις ἠγωνίζετο:
καὶ τοὺς τραγῳδούς φησιν ἀποδείξειν κρόνους
τοὺς νῦν διορχησάμενος ὀλίγον ὕστερον.

Φιλοκλέων

τίς ἐπ᾽ αὐλείοισι θύραις θάσσει;

Ξανθίας

τουτὶ καὶ δὴ χωρεῖ τὸ κακόν.

Φιλοκλέων

κλῇθρα χαλάσθω τάδε. καὶ δὴ γὰρ
σχήματος ἀρχὴ —

Ξανθίας

μᾶλλον δέ γ᾽ ἴσως μανίας ἀρχή.

Φιλοκλέων

πλευρὰν λυγίσαντος ὑπὸ ῥώμης:
οἷον μυκτὴρ μυκᾶται καὶ
σφόνδυλος ἀχεῖ.

Ξανθίας
πῖθ᾽ ἑλλέβορον.

Φιλοκλέων

πτήσσει Φρύνιχος ὥς τις ἀλέκτωρ —

Ξανθίας

τάχα βαλλήσεις.

Φιλοκλέων

σκέλος οὐράνιόν γ᾽ ἐκλακτίζων.
πρωκτὸς χάσκει.

Ξανθίας
κατὰ σαυτὸν ὅρα.

Φιλοκλέων

νῦν γὰρ ἐν ἄρθροις τοῖς ἡμετέροις
στρέφεται χαλαρὰ κοτυληδών.

Φιλοκλέων

οὐκ εὖ;

Βδελυκλέων
μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἀλλὰ μανικὰ πράγματα.

Φιλοκλέων

θέρε νυν ἀνείπω κἀνταγωνιστὰς καλῶ.
εἴ τις τραγῳδός φησιν ὀρχεῖσθαι καλῶς,
ἐμοὶ διορχησόμενος ἐνθάδ᾽ εἰσίτω.
φησίν τις ἢ οὐδείς; **Ξανθίας**
εἷς γ᾽ ἐκεινοσὶ μόνος.

Φιλοκλέων

τίς ὁ κακοδαίμων ἐστίν;

Ξανθίας
υἱὸς Καρκίνου

ὁ μέσατος.

Φιλοκλέων
ἀλλ᾽ οὗτός γε καταποθήσεται:
ἀπολῶ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐμμελείᾳ κονδύλου.
ἐν τῷ ῥυθμῷ γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστ᾽.

Ξανθίας
ἀλλ᾽ ᾠζυρὲ
ἕτερος τραγῳδὸς Καρκινίτης ἔρχεται,
ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ.

Φιλοκλέων
νὴ Δί᾽ ὠψώνηκ᾽ ἄρα.

Ξανθίας

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐδέν γ᾽ ἄλλο πλήν γε καρκίνους:
προσέρχεται γὰρ ἕτερος αὖ τῶν Καρκίνου.

Φιλοκλέων

τουτὶ τί ἦν τὸ προσέρπον; ὀξὶς ἢ φάλαγξ;

Ξανθίας

ὁ πινοτήρης οὗτός ἐστι τοῦ γένους,
ὁ σμικρότατος, ὃς τὴν τραγῳδίαν ποιεῖ.

Φιλοκλέων

ὦ Καρκίν᾽ ὦ μακάριε τῆς εὐπαιδίας,
ὅσον τὸ πλῆθος κατέπεσεν τῶν ὀρχίλων.
ἀτὰρ καταβατέον γ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτούς μ᾽: ᾠζυρέ,
ἅλμην κύκα τούτοισιν, ἣν ἐγὼ κρατῶ.

Χορός

φέρε νυν ἡμεῖς αὐτοῖς ὀλίγον ξυγχωρήσωμεν ἅπαντες,
ἵν᾽ ἐφ᾽ ἡσυχίας ἡμῶν πρόσθεν βεμβικίζωσιν ἑαυτούς. **Χορός**

ἄγ᾽ ὦ μεγαλώνυμα τέκνα
τοῦ θαλασσίου θεοῦ,
πηδᾶτε παρὰ ψάμαθον
καὶ θῖν᾽ ἁλὸς ἀτρυγέτου,
καρίδων ἀδελφοί: **Χορός**

ταχὺν πόδα κυκλοσοβεῖτε,
καὶ τὸ Φρυνίχειον
ἐκλακτισάτω τις, ὅπως
ἰδόντες ἄνω σκέλος ὤζωσιν
οἱ θεαταί. **Χορός**

στρόβει, παράβαινε κύκλῳ καὶ γάστρισον σεαυτόν,
ῥῖπτε σκέλος οὐράνιον: βέμβικες ἐγγενέσθων.
καὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ ποντομέδων ἄναξ πατὴρ προσέρπει
ἡσθεὶς ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ἑαυτοῦ παισὶ τοῖς τριόρχοις.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐξάγετ᾽, εἴ τι φιλεῖτ᾽ ὀρχούμενοι, θύραζε
ἡμᾶς ταχύ: τοῦτο γὰρ οὐδείς πω πάρος δέδρακεν,
ὀρχούμενον ὅστις ἀπήλλαξεν χορὸν τρυγῳδῶν.

PEACE

Οἰκέτης Α
αἶρ᾽ αἶρε μᾶζαν ὡς τάχιστα κανθάρῳ.

Οἰκέτης Β
ἰδού. δὸς αὐτῷ, τῷ κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολουμένῳ
καὶ μήποτ᾽ αὐτῆς μᾶζαν ἡδίω φάγοι.

Οἰκέτης Α
δὸς μᾶζαν ἑτέραν, ἐξ ὀνίδων πεπλασμένην.

Οἰκέτης Β
ἰδοὺ μάλ᾽ αὖφις. ποῦ γὰρ ἦν νῦν δὴ ᾽φερες;
κατέφαγεν;

Οἰκέτης Α
οὐ μὰ τὸν Δῖ ἀλλ᾽ ἐξαρπάσας
ὅλην ἐνέκαψε περικυλίσας τοῖν ποδοῖν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα τρῖβε πολλὰς καὶ πυκνάς.

Οἰκέτης Β
ἄνδρες κοπρολόγοι προσλάβεσθε πρὸς θεῶν,
εἰ μή με βούλεσθ᾽ ἀποπνιγέντα περιιδεῖν.

Οἰκέτης Α
ἑτέραν ἑτέραν δός, παιδὸς ἡταιρηκότος·
τετριμμένης γάρ φησιν ἐπιθυμεῖν.

Οἰκέτης Β
ἰδού.
ἑνὸς μὲν ὦνδρες ἀπολελύσθαι μοι δοκῶ·
οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἂν φαίη με μάττοντ᾽ ἐσθίειν.

Οἰκέτης Α
αἰβοῖ, φέρ᾽ ἄλλην χἀτέραν μοι χἀτέραν,
καὶ τρῖβ᾽ <ἔθ᾽> ἑτέρας.

Οἰκέτης Β
μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω ᾽γὼ μὲν οὔ·
οὐ γὰρ ἔθ᾽ οἷός τ᾽ εἶμ᾽ ὑπερέχειν τῆς ἀντλίας.

Οἰκέτης Α
αὐτὴν ἄρ᾽ οἴσω συλλαβὼν τὴν ἀντλίαν.

Οἰκέτης Β
νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἐς κόρακάς γε καὶ σαυτόν γε πρός.
ὑμῶν δέ γ᾽ εἴ τις οἶδ᾽ ἐμοὶ κατειπάτω,
πόθεν ἂν πριαίμην ῥῖνα μὴ τετρημένην.
οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔργον ἦν ἄρ᾽ ἀθλιώτερον
ἢ κανθάρῳ μάττοντα παρέχειν ἐσθίειν.
ὗς μὲν γάρ, ὥσπερ ἂν χέσῃ τις, ἢ κύων
φαύλως ἐρείδει· τοῦτο δ᾽ ὑπὸ φρονήματος
βρενθύεταί τε καὶ φαγεῖν οὐκ ἀξιοῖ,
ἢν μὴ παραθῶ τρίψας δι᾽ ἡμέρας ὅλης
ὥσπερ γυναικὶ γογγύλην μεμαγμένην.
ἀλλ᾽ εἰ πέπαυται τῆς ἐδωδῆς σκέψομαι
τῃδὶ παροίξας τῆς θύρας, ἵνα μή μ᾽ ἴδῃ.
ἔρειδε, μὴ παύσαιο μηδέποτ᾽ ἐσθίων
τέως ἕως σαυτὸν λάθοις διαρραγείς.
οἷον δὲ κύψας ὁ κατάρατος ἐσθίει,
ὥσπερ παλαιστής, παραβαλὼν τοὺς γομφίους,
καὶ ταῦτα τὴν κεφαλήν τε καὶ τὼ χεῖρέ πως
ὠδὶ περιάγων, ὥσπερ οἱ τὰ σχοινία
τὰ παχέα συμβάλλοντες ἐς τὰς ὀλκάδας.
μιαρὸν τὸ χρῆμα καὶ κάκοσμον καὶ βορόν·
χὤτου ποτ᾽ ἐστὶ δαιμόνων ἡ προσβολὴ
οὐκ οἶδ᾽. Ἀφροδίτης μὲν γὰρ οὔ μοι φαίνεται,
οὐ μὴν Χαρίτων γε.

Οἰκέτης Α
τοῦ γάρ ἐστ᾽;

Οἰκέτης Β
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως
τοῦτ᾽ ἔστι τὸ τέρας οὐ Διὸς καταιβάτου.

Οἰκέτης Α
οὐκοῦν ἂν ἤδη τῶν θεατῶν τις λέγοι
νεανίας δοκησίσοφος, "τὸ δὲ πρᾶγμα τί;
ὁ κάνθαρος δὲ πρὸς τί;" κᾆτ᾽ αὐτῷ γ᾽ ἀνὴρ
Ἰωνικός τίς φησι παρακαθήμενος·
"δοκέω μέν, ἐς Κλέωνα τοῦτ᾽ αἰνίσσεται,
ὡς κεῖνος ἀναιδέως τὴν σπατίλην ἐσθίει".

Οἰκέτης Β
ἀλλ᾽ εἰσιὼν τῷ κανθάρῳ δώσω πιεῖν.

Οἰκέτης Α
ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν λόγον γε τοῖσι παιδίοις
καὶ τοῖσιν ἀνδρίοισι καὶ τοῖς ἀνδράσιν
καὶ τοῖς ὑπερτάτοισιν ἀνδράσιν φράσω
καὶ τοῖς ὑπερηνορέουσιν ἔτι τούτοις μάλα.
ὁ δεσπότης μου μαίνεται καινὸν τρόπον,
οὐχ ὅνπερ ὑμεῖς, ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερον καινὸν πάνυ.
δι᾽ ἡμέρας γὰρ ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν βλέπων
ὠδὶ κεχηνὼς λοιδορεῖται τῷ Διὶ
καί φησιν, "ὦ Ζεῦ τί ποτε βουλεύει ποιεῖν;
κατάθου τὸ κόρημα· μὴ ᾽κκόρει τὴν Ἑλλάδα".
ἔα ἔα.
σιγήσαθ᾽, ὡς φωνῆς ἀκούειν μοι δοκῶ.

Τρυγαῖος
ὦ Ζεῦ τί δρασείεις ποθ᾽ ἡμῶν τὸν λεών;
λήσεις σεαυτὸν τὰς πόλεις ἐκκοκκίσας.

Οἰκέτης Α
τοῦτ᾽ ἔστι τουτὶ τὸ κακὸν αὖθ᾽ οὑγὼ ᾽λεγον.
τὸ γὰρ παράδειγμα τῶν μανιῶν ἀκούετε·
ἃ δ᾽ εἶπε πρῶτον ἡνίκ᾽ ἤρχεθ᾽ ἡ χολή,
πεύσεσθ᾽. ἔφασκε γὰρ πρὸς αὑτὸν ἐνθαδί·
"πῶς ἄν ποτ᾽ ἀφικοίμην ἂν εὐθὺ τοῦ Διός;"
ἔπειτα λεπτὰ κλιμάκια ποιούμενος,
πρὸς ταῦτ᾽ ἀνηρριχᾶτ᾽ ἂν ἐς τὸν οὐρανόν,
ἕως ξυνετρίβη τῆς κεφαλῆς καταρρυείς.
ἐχθὲς δὲ μετὰ ταῦτ᾽ ἐκφθαρεὶς οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅποι

εἰσήγαγ᾽ Αἰτναῖον μέγιστον κάνθαρον,
κἄπειτα τοῦτον ἱπποκομεῖν μ᾽ ἠνάγκασεν,
καὐτὸς καταψῶν αὐτὸν ὥσπερ πωλίον,
“ὦ Πηγάσειον”, φησί, “γενναῖον πτερόν,
ὅπως πετήσει μ᾽ εὐθὺ τοῦ Διὸς λαβών”.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅ τι ποιεῖ τῃδὶ διακύψας ὄψομαι.
οἴμοι τάλας· ἴτε δεῦρο δεῦρ ὦ γείτονες·
ὁ δεσπότης γάρ μου μετέωρος αἴρεται
ἱππηδὸν ἐς τὸν ἀέρ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῦ κανθάρου.

Τρυγαῖος
ἥσυχος ἥσυχος, ἠρέμα, κάνθων·
μή μοι σοβαρῶς χώρει λίαν
εὐθὺς ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς ῥώμῃ πίσυνος,
πρὶν ἂν ἰδίῃς καὶ διαλύσῃς
ἄρθρων ἵνας πτερύγων ῥύμῃ.
καὶ μὴ πνεῖ μοι κακόν, ἀντιβολῶ σ᾽·
εἰ δὲ ποιήσεις τοῦτο, κατ᾽ οἴκους
αὐτοῦ μεῖνον τοὺς ἡμετέρους.

Οἰκέτης Α
ὦ δέσποτ᾽ ἄναξ ὡς παραπαίεις.

Τρυγαῖος
σίγα σίγα.

Οἰκέτης Α
ποῖ δῆτ᾽ ἄλλως μετεωροκοπεῖς;

Τρυγαῖος
ὑπὲρ Ἑλλήνων πάντων πέτομαι
τόλμημα νέον παλαμησάμενος.

Οἰκέτης Α
τί πέτει; τί μάτην οὐχ ὑγιαίνεις;

Τρυγαῖος
εὐφημεῖν χρὴ καὶ μὴ φλαῦρον
μηδὲν γρύζειν ἀλλ᾽ ὀλολύζειν·

τοῖς τ᾽ ἀνθρώποισι φράσον σιγᾶν,
τοὺς τε κοπρῶνας καὶ τὰς λαύρας
καιναῖς πλίνθοισιν ἀνοικοδομεῖν 100
καὶ τοὺς πρωκτοὺς ἐπικλῄειν.

Οἰκέτης Α
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως σιγήσομ᾽, ἢν μή μοι φράσῃς
ὅποι πέτεσθαι διανοεῖ.

Τρυγαῖος
τί δ᾽ ἄλλο γ᾽ ἢ
ὡς τὸν Δί᾽ ἐς τὸν οὐρανόν;

Οἰκέτης Α
τίνα νοῦν ἔχων;

Τρυγαῖος
ἐρησόμενος ἐκεῖνον Ἑλλήνων πέρι 105
ἁπαξαπάντων ὅ τι ποιεῖν βουλεύεται.

Οἰκέτης Α
ἐὰν δὲ μή σοι καταγορεύῃ;

Τρυγαῖος
γράψομαι
Μήδοισιν αὐτὸν προδιδόναι τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

Οἰκέτης Α
μὰ τὸν Διόνυσον οὐδέποτε ζῶντός γ᾽ ἐμοῦ.

Τρυγαῖος
οὐκ ἔστι παρὰ ταῦτ᾽ ἄλλ᾽. 110

Οἰκέτης Α
ἰοὺ ἰοὺ ἰού·
ὦ παιδί᾽ ὁ πατὴρ ἀπολιπὼν ἀπέρχεται
ὑμᾶς ἐρήμους ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν λάθρᾳ.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀντιβολεῖτε τὸν πατέρ ὦ κακοδαίμονα.

Παιδίον
ὦ πάτερ ὦ πάτερ ἆρ᾽ ἔτυμός γε
δώμασιν ἡμετέροις φάτις ἥκει,
ὡς σὺ μετ᾽ ὀρνίθων προλιρὼν ἐμὲ
ἐς κόρακας βαδιεῖ μεταμώνιος;
ἔστι τι τῶνδ᾽ ἐτύμως; εἶπ᾽ ὦ πάτερ, εἴ τι φιλεῖς με.

Τρυγαῖος
δοξάσαι ἔστι κόραι, τὸ δ᾽ ἐτήτυμον ἄχθομαι ὑμῖν,
ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν αἰτίζητ᾽ ἄρτον πάππαν με καλοῦσαι,
ἔνδον δ᾽ ἀργυρίου μηδὲ ψακὰς ᾖ πάνυ πάμπαν.
ἦν δ᾽ ἐγὼ εὖ πράξας ἔλθω πάλιν, ἔξετ᾽ ἐν ὥρᾳ
κολλύραν μεγάλην καὶ κόνδυλον ὄψον ἐρ᾽ αὐτῇ.

Παιδίον
καὶ τίς πόρος σοι τῆς ὁδοῦ γενήσεται;

ναῦς μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἄξει σε ταύτην τὴν ὁδόν.

Τρυγαῖος
πτηνὸς πορεύσει πῶλος· οὐ ναυσθλώσομαι.

Παιδίον
τίς δ᾽ ἡ ᾽πίνοιά σοὐστὶν ὥστε κάνθαρον
ζεύξαντ᾽ ἐλαύνειν ἐς θεοὺς ὦ παππία;

Τρυγαῖος
ἐν τοῖσιν Αἰσώπου λόγοις ἐξηυρέθη
μόνος πετεινῶν ἐς θεοὺς ἀφιγμένος.

Παιδίον
ἄπιστον εἶπας μῦθον ὦ πάτερ πάτερ,
ὅπως κάκοσμον ζῷον ἦλθεν ἐς θεούς.

Τρυγαῖος
ἦλθεν κατ᾽ ἔχθραν αἰετοῦ πάλαι ποτέ,
ᾧ᾽ ἐκκυλίνδων κἀντιτιμωρούμενος.

Παιδίον
οὐκοῦν ἐχρῆν σε Πηγάσου ζεῦξαι πτερόν,
ὅπως ἐφαίνου τοῖς θεοῖς τραγικώτερος.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ μέλ᾽ ἄν μοι σιτίων διπλῶν ἔδει·
νῦν δ᾽ ἅττ᾽ ἂν αὐτὸς καταφάγω τὰ σιτία,
τούτοισι τοῖς αὐτοῖσι τοῦτον χορτάσω.

Παιδίον
τί δ᾽ ἢν ἐς ὑγρὸν πόντιον πέσῃ βάθος;
πῶς ἐξολισθεῖν πτηνὸς ὢν δυνήσεται;

Τρυγαῖος
ἐπίτηδες εἶχον πηδάλιον, ᾧ χρήσομαι·
τὸ δὲ πλοῖον ἔσται Ναξιουργὴς κάνθαρος.

Παιδίον
λιμὴν δὲ τίς σε δέξεται φορούμενον;

Τρυγαῖος
ἐν Πειραιεῖ δήπου ᾽στὶ Κανθάρου λιμήν.

Παιδίον
ἐκεῖνο τήρει, μὴ σφαλεὶς καταρρυῇς
ἐντεῦθεν, εἶτα χωλὸς ὢν Εὐριπίδῃ
λόγον παράσχῃς καὶ τραγῳδία γένῃ.

Τρυγαῖος
ἐμοὶ μελήσει ταῦτά γ᾽. ἀλλὰ χαίρετε.
ὑμεῖς δέ γ᾽, ὑπὲρ ὧν τοὺς πόνους ἐγὼ πονῶ,
μὴ βδεῖτε μηδὲ χέζεθ᾽ ἡμερῶν τριῶν·
ὡς εἰ μετέωρος οὗτος ὢν ὀσφρήσεται,
κατωκάρα ῥίψας με βουκολήσεται.
ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε Πήγασε χώρει χαίρων,
χρυσοχάλινον πάταγον ψαλίων
διακινήσας φαιδροῖς ὠσίν.
τί ποιεῖς; τί ποιεῖς; ποῖ παρακλίνεις
τοὺς μυκτῆρας; πρὸς τὰς λαύρας.
ἴει σαυτὸν θαρρῶν ἀπὸ γῆς,
κᾆτα δρομαίαν πτέρυγ᾽ ἐκτείνων
ὀρθὸς χώρει Διὸς εἰς αὐλάς,
ἀπὸ μὲν κάκκης τὴν ῥῖν᾽ ἀπέχων,
ἀπὸ δ᾽ ἡμερίων σίτων πάντων.
ἄνθρωπε τί δρᾷς, οὗτος ὁ χέζων
ἐν Πειραιεῖ παρὰ ταῖς πόρναις;
ἀπολεῖς μ᾽ ἀπολεῖς. οὐ κατορύξεις
κἀπιφορήσεις τῆς γῆς πολλήν,
κἀπιφυτεύσεις ἔρπυλλον ἄνω
καὶ μύρον ἐπιχεῖς; ὡς ἦν τι πεσὼν
ἐνθένδε πάθω, τοὐμοῦ θανάτου
πέντε τάλαντθ᾽ ἡ πόλις ἡ Χίων
διὰ τὸν σὸν πρωκτὸν ὀφλήσει.
οἴμ᾽ ὡς δέδοικα, κοὐκέτι σκώπτων λέγω.
ὦ μηχανοποιὲ πρόσεχε τὸν νοῦν ὡς ἐμέ·
ἤδη στρέφει τι πνεῦμα περὶ τὸν ὀμφαλόν,
κεἰ μὴ φυλάξει, χορτάσω τὸν κάνθαρον.
ἀτὰρ ἐγγὺς εἶναι τῶν θεῶν ἐμοὶ δοκῶ,
καὶ δὴ καθορῶ τὴν οἰκίαν τὴν τοῦ Διός.

τίς ἐν Διὸς θύραισιν; οὐκ ἀνοίξετε;

Ἑρμῆς
πόθεν βροτοῦ με προσέβαλ᾽; ὦναξ Ἡράκλεις
τουτὶ τί ἐστι τὸ κακόν;

Τρυγαῖος
ἱπποκάνθαρος.

Ἑρμῆς
ὦ βδελυρὲ καὶ τολμηρὲ κἀναίσχυντε σὺ
καὶ μιαρὲ καὶ παμμίαρε καὶ μιαρώτατε,
πῶς δεῦρ᾽ ἀνῆλθες ὦ μιαρῶν μιαρώτατε;
τί σοί ποτ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ὄνομ᾽; οὐκ ἐρεῖς;

Τρυγαῖος
μιαρώτατος.

Ἑρμῆς
ποδαπὸς τὸ γένος δ᾽ εἶ; φράζε μοι.

Τρυγαῖος
μιαρώτατος.

Ἑρμῆς
πατὴρ δέ σοι τίς ἐστ᾽;

Τρυγαῖος
ἐμοί; μιαρώτατος.

Ἑρμῆς
οὔτοι μὰ τὴν γῆν ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως οὐκ ἀποθανεῖ,
εἰ μὴ κατερεῖς μοι τοὔνομ᾽ ὅ τι ποτ᾽ ἔστι σοι.

Τρυγαῖος
Τρυγαῖος Ἀθμονεύς, ἀμπελουργὸς δεξιός,
οὐ συκοφάντης οὐδ᾽ ἐραστὴς πραγμάτων.

Ἑρμῆς
ἥκεις δὲ κατὰ τί;

Τρυγαῖος
τὰ κρέα ταυτί σοι φέρων.

Ἑρμῆς
ὦ δειλακρίων πῶς ἦλθες;

Τρυγαῖος
ὦ γλίσχρων ὁρᾷς
ὡς οὐκέτ᾽ εἶναί σοι δοκῶ μιαρώτατος;
ἴθι νυν κάλεσόν μοι τὸν Δί᾽. 195

Ἑρμῆς
ἰὴ ἰὴ ἰή,
ὅτι οὐδὲ μέλλεις ἐγγὺς εἶναι τῶν θεῶν·
φροῦδοι γὰρ ἐχθές εἰσιν ἐξῳκισμένοι.

Τρυγαῖος
ποῖ γῆς;

Ἑρμῆς
ἰδοὺ γῆς.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλὰ ποῖ;

Ἑρμῆς
πόρρω πάνυ;
ὑπ᾽ αὐτὸν ἀτεχνῶς τοὐρανοῦ τὸν κύτταρον.

Τρυγαῖος
πῶς οὖν σὺ δῆτ᾽ ἐνταῦθα κατελείφθης μόνος; 200

Ἑρμῆς
τὰ λοιπὰ τηρῶ σκευάρια τὰ τῶν θεῶν,
χυτρίδια καὶ σανίδια κἀμφορείδια.

Τρυγαῖος
ἐξῳκίσαντο δ᾽ οἱ θεοὶ τίνος οὕνεκα;

Ἑρμῆς

Ἕλλησιν ὀργισθέντες. εἶτ᾽ ἐνταῦθα μὲν
ἵν᾽ ἦσαν αὐτοὶ τὸν Πόλεμον κατῴκισαν,
ὑμᾶς παραδόντες δρᾶν ἀτεχνῶς ὅ τι βούλεται·
αὐτοὶ δ᾽ ἀνῳκίσανθ᾽ ὅπως ἀνωτάτω,
ἵνα μὴ βλέποιεν μαχομένους ὑμᾶς ἔτι
μηδ᾽ ἀντιβολούντων μηδὲν αἰσθανοίατο.

Τρυγαῖος
τοῦ δ᾽ οὕνεχ᾽ ἡμᾶς ταῦτ᾽ ἔδρασαν; εἰπέ μοι.

Ἑρμῆς
ὁτιὴ πολεμεῖν ᾑρεῖσθ᾽ ἐκείνων πολλάκις
σπονδὰς ποιούντων· κεἰ μὲν οἱ Λακωνικοὶ
ὑπερβάλοιντο μικρόν, ἔλεγον ἂν ταδί·
“ναὶ τὼ σιὼ νῦν ὠττικίων δωσεῖ δίκαν”.
εἰ δ᾽ αὖ τι πράξαιτ᾽ ἀγαθὸν ἀττικωνικοί
κἄλθοιεν οἱ Λάκωνες εἰρήνης πέρι,
ἐλέγετ᾽ ἂν ὑμεῖς εὐθύς· “ἐξαπατώμεθα
νὴ τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν, νὴ Δί᾽, οὐχὶ πειστέον·
ἥξουσι καὖθις, ἢν ἔχωμεν τὴν Πύλον”.

Τρυγαῖος
ὁ γοῦν χαρακτὴρ ἡμεδαπὸς τῶν ῥημάτων.

Ἑρμῆς
ὧν οὕνεκ᾽ οὐκ οἶδ᾽ εἴ ποτ᾽ Εἰρήνην ἔτι
τὸ λοιπὸν ὄψεσθ᾽.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλὰ ποῖ γὰρ οἴχεται;

Ἑρμῆς
ὁ Πόλεμος αὐτὴν ἐνέβαλ᾽ εἰς ἄντρον βαθύ.

Τρυγαῖος
ἐς ποῖον;

Ἑρμῆς
ἐς τουτὶ τὸ κάτω, κἄπειθ᾽ ὁρᾷς

ὅσους ἄνωθεν ἐπεφόρησε τῶν λίθων,
ἵνα μὴ λάβητε μηδέποτ᾽ αὐτήν.

Τρυγαῖος
εἰπέ μοι,
ἡμᾶς δὲ δὴ τί δρᾶν παρασκευάζεται;

Ἑρμῆς
οὐκ οἶδα πλὴν ἔν, ὅτι θυείαν ἐσπέρας
ὑπερφυᾶ τὸ μέγεθος εἰσηνέγκατο.

Τρυγαῖος
τί δῆτα ταύτῃ τῇ θυείᾳ χρήσεται;

Ἑρμῆς
τρίβειν ἐν αὐτῇ τὰς πόλεις βουλεύεται.
ἀλλ᾽ εἶμι· καὶ γὰρ ἐξιέναι γνώμην ἐμὴν
μέλλει· θορυβεῖ γοῦν ἔνδον.

Τρυγαῖος
οἴμοι δείλαιος.
φέρ᾽ αὐτὸν ἀποδρῶ· καὶ γὰρ ὥσπερ ᾐσθόμην
καὐτὸς θυείας φθέγμα πολεμιστηρίας.

Πόλεμος
ἰὼ βροτοὶ βροτοὶ βροτοὶ πολυτλήμονες,
ὡς αὐτίκα μάλα τὰς γνάθους ἀλγήσετε.

Τρυγαῖος
ὦναξ Ἄπολλον τῆς θυείας τοῦ πλάτους,
ὅσον κακόν, καὶ τοῦ Πολέμου τοῦ βλέμματος.
ἆρ᾽ οὗτός ἐστ᾽ ἐκεῖνος ὃν καὶ φεύγομεν,
ὁ δεινός, ὁ ταλαύρινος, ὁ κατὰ τοῖν σκελοῖν;

Πόλεμος
ἰὼ Πρασιαὶ τρὶς ἄθλιαι καὶ πεντάκις
καὶ πολλοδεκάκις, ὡς ἀπολεῖσθε τήμερον.

Τρυγαῖος

τουτὶ μὲν ἄνδρες οὐδὲν ἡμῖν πρᾶγμά πω·
τὸ γὰρ κακὸν τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ τῆς Λακωνικῆς.

Πόλεμος
ὦ Μέγαρα Μέγαρ᾽ ὡς ἐπιτετρίψεσθ᾽ αὐτίκα
ἁπαξάπαντα καταμεμυττωτευμένα.

Τρυγαῖος
βαβαὶ βαβαιὰξ ὡς μεγάλα καὶ δριμέα
τοῖσι Μεγαρεῦσιν ἐνέβαλεν τὰ κλαύματα.

Πόλεμος
ἰὼ Σικελία καὶ σὺ δ᾽ ὡς ἀπόλλυσαι.

Τρυγαῖος
οἵα πόλις τάλαινα διακναισθήσεται.

Πόλεμος
φέρ᾽ ἐπιχέω καὶ τὸ μέλι τουτὶ τἀττικόν.

Τρυγαῖος
οὗτος παραινῶ σοι μέλιτι χρῆσθἀτέρῳ.
τετρώβολον τοῦτ᾽ ἐστί· φείδου τἀττικοῦ.

Πόλεμος
παῖ παῖ Κυδοιμέ.

Κύδοιμος
τί με καλεῖς;

Πόλεμος
κλαύσει μακρά.
ἔστηκας ἀργός; οὐτοσί σοι κόνδυλος.

Κύδοιμος
ὡς δριμύς. οἴμοι μοι τάλας ὦ δέσποτα.
μῶν τῶν σκορόδων ἐνέβαλες ἐς τὸν κόνδυλον;

Πόλεμος
οἴσεις ἀλετρίβανον τρέχων;

Κύδοιμος
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ μέλε
οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν· ἐχθὲς εἰσῳκίσμεθα.

Πόλεμος
οὔκουν παρ᾽ Ἀθηναίων μεταθρέξει ταχὺ <πάνυ>;

Κύδοιμος
ἔγωγε νὴ Δί᾽· εἰ δὲ μή γε, κλαύσομαι.

Τρυγαῖος
ἄγε δὴ τί δρῶμεν ὦ πόνηρ᾽ ἀνθρώπια;
ὁρᾶτε τὸν κίνδυνον ἡμῖν ὡς μέγας·
εἴπερ γὰρ ἥξει τὸν ἀλετρίβανον φέρων,
τούτῳ ταράξει τὰς πόλεις καθήμενος.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ Διόνυσ᾽ ἀπόλοιτο καὶ μὴ ᾽λθοι φέρων.

Πόλεμος
οὗτος.

Κύδοιμος
τί ἔστιν;

Πόλεμος
οὐ φέρεις;

Κύδοιμος
τὸ δεῖνα γὰρ
ἀπόλωλ᾽ Ἀθηναίοισιν ἀλετρίβανος,
ὁ βυρσοπώλης, ὃς ἐκύκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

Τρυγαῖος
εὖ γ᾽ ὦ πότνια δέσποιν᾽ Ἀθηναία ποιῶν
ἀπόλωλ᾽ ἐκεῖνος κἀν δέοντι τῇ πόλει,
ἢ πρίν γε τὸν μυττωτὸν ἡμῖν ἐγχέαι.

Πόλεμος
οὔκουν ἕτερον δῆτ᾽ ἐκ Λακεδαίμονος μέτει
ἀνύσας τι;

Κύδοιμος
ταῦτ᾽ ὦ δέσποθ᾽.

Πόλεμος
ἦκέ νυν ταχύ.

Τρυγαῖος
ὦνδρες τί πεισόμεσθα; νῦν ἀγὼν μέγας.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴ τις ὑμῶν ἐν Σαμοθρᾴκῃ τυγχάνει
μεμυημένος, νῦν ἐστιν εὔξασθαι καλὸν
ἀποστραφῆναι τοῦ μετιόντος τὼ πόδε.

Κύδοιμος
οἴμοι τάλας, οἴμοι γε κἄτ᾽ οἴμοι μάλα.

Πόλεμος
τί ἔστι; μῶν οὐκ αὖ φέρεις;

Κύδοιμος
ἀπόλωλε γὰρ
καὶ τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοισιν ἁλετρίβανος.

Πόλεμος
πῶς ὦ πανοῦργ᾽;

Κύδοιμος
ἐς τἀπὶ Θρᾴκης χωρία
χρήσαντες ἑτέροις αὐτὸν εἶτ᾽ ἀπώλεσαν.

Τρυγαῖος
εὖ γ᾽ εὖ γε ποιήσαντες ὦ Διοσκόρω.
ἴσως ἂν εὖ γένοιτο· θαρρεῖτ᾽ ὦ βροτοί.

Πόλεμος
ἀπόφερε τὰ σκεύη λαβὼν ταυτὶ πάλιν·
ἐγὼ δὲ δοίδυκ᾽ εἰσιὼν ποιήσομαι.

Τρυγαῖος
νῦν τοῦτ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ ἥκει τὸ Δάτιδος μέλος,

ὃ δεφόμενός ποτ᾽ ἦδε τῆς μεσημβρίας,
“ὡς ἥδομαι καὶ χαίρομαι κεὐφραίνομαι”.
νῦν ἐστιν ἡμῖν ὦνδρες Ἕλληνες καλὸν
ἀπαλλαγεῖσι πραγμάτων τε καὶ μαχῶν
ἐξελκύσαι τὴν πᾶσιν Εἰρήνην φίλην,
πρὶν ἕτερον αὖ δοίδυκα κωλῦσαί τινα.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ γεωργοὶ κἄμποροι καὶ τέκτονες
καὶ δημιουργοὶ καὶ μέτοικοι καὶ ξένοι
καὶ νησιῶται, δεῦρ᾽ ἴτ᾽ ὦ πάντες λεῴ,
ὡς τάχιστ᾽ ἄμας λαβόντες καὶ μοχλοὺς καὶ σχοινία·
νῦν γὰρ ἡμῖν ἁρπάσαι πάρεστιν ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος.

Χορός

δεῦρο πᾶς χώρει προθύμως εὐθὺ τῆς σωτηρίας.
ὦ Πανέλληνες βοηθήσωμεν, εἴπερ πώποτε,
τάξεων ἀπαλλαγέντες καὶ κακῶν φοινικικῶν·

ἡμέρα γὰρ ἐξέλαμψεν ἥδε μισολάμαχος.
πρὸς τάδ᾽ ἡμῖν, εἴ τι χρὴ δρᾶν, φράζε κἀρχιτεκτόνει· 305
οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως ἀπειπεῖν ἂν δοκῶ μοι τήμερον,
πρὶν μοχλοῖς καὶ μηχαναῖσιν ἐς τὸ φῶς ἀνελκύσαι
τὴν θεῶν πασῶν μεγίστην καὶ φιλαμπελωτάτην.

Τρυγαῖος
οὐ σιωπήσεσθ᾽, ὅπως μὴ περιχαρεῖς τῷ πράγματι
τὸν Πόλεμον ἐκζωπυρήσετ᾽ ἔνδοθεν κεκραγότες; 310

Χορός
ἀλλ᾽ ἀκούσαντες τοιούτου χαίρομεν κηρύγματος.
οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἔχοντας ἥκειν σιτί᾽ ἡμερῶν τριῶν.

Τρυγαῖος
εὐλαβεῖσθέ νυν ἐκεῖνον τὸν κάτωθεν Κέρβερον,
μὴ παφλάζων καὶ κεκραγὼς ὥσπερ ἡνίκ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ ἦν,
ἐμποδὼν ἡμῖν γένηται τὴν θεὸν μὴ ᾽ξελκύσαι. 315

Χορός
οὔτι καὶ νῦν ἔστιν αὐτὴν ὅστις ἐξαιρήσεται,
ἢν ἅπαξ ἐς χεῖρας ἔλθῃ τὰς ἐμάς. ἰοῦ ἰοῦ.

Τρυγαῖος
ἐξολεῖτέ μ᾽ ὦνδρες, εἰ μὴ τῆς βοῆς ἀνήσετε·
ἐκδραμὼν γὰρ πάντα ταυτὶ συνταράξει τοῖν ποδοῖν.

Χορός
ὡς κυκάτω καὶ πατείτω πάντα καὶ ταραττέτω, 320
οὐ γὰρ ἂν χαίροντες ἡμεῖς τήμερον παυσαίμεθ᾽ ἄν.

Τρυγαῖος
τί τὸ κακόν; τί πάσχετ᾽ ὦνδρες; μηδαμῶς πρὸς τῶν θεῶν
πρᾶγμα κάλλιστον διαφθείρητε διὰ τὰ σχήματα.

Χορός
ἀλλ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ οὐ σχηματίζειν βούλομ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ἡδονῆς
οὐκ ἐμοῦ κινοῦντος αὐτὼ τὼ σκέλει χορεύετον. 325

Τρυγαῖος
μή τι καὶ νυνί γ᾽ ἔτ᾽, ἀλλὰ παῦε παῦ᾽ ὀρχούμενος.

Χορός
ἦν ἰδοὺ καὶ δὴ πέπαυμαι.

Τρυγαῖος
φῄς γε, παύει δ᾽ οὐδέπω.

Χορός
ἓν μὲν οὖν τουτί μ᾽ ἔασον ἑλκύσαι, καὶ μηκέτι.

Τρυγαῖος
τοῦτό νυν, καὶ μηκέτ᾽ ἄλλο μηδὲν ὀρχήσησθ᾽ ἔτι.

Χορός
οὐκ ἂν ὀρχησαίμεθ᾽, εἴπερ ὠφελήσαιμέν τί σε. 330

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ ὁρᾶτ᾽ οὔπω πέπαυσθε.

Χορός
τουτογὶ νὴ τὸν Δία
τὸ σκέλος ῥίψαντες ἤδη λήγομεν τὸ δεξιόν.

Τρυγαῖος
ἐπιδίδωμι τοῦτό γ᾽ ὑμῖν ὥστε μὴ λυπεῖν ἔτι.

Χορός
ἀλλὰ καὶ τἀριστερόν τοί μ᾽ ἐστ᾽ ἀναγκαίως ἔχον.
ἥδομαι γὰρ καὶ γέγηθα καὶ πέπορδα καὶ γελῶ 335
μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ γῆρας ἐκδὺς ἐκφυγὼν τὴν ἀσπίδα.

Τρυγαῖος
μή τι καὶ νυνί γε χαίρετ᾽· οὐ γὰρ ἴστε πω σαφῶς·
ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν λάβωμεν αὐτήν, τηνικαῦτα χαίρετε
καὶ βοᾶτε καὶ γελᾶτ᾽· ἤδη
γὰρ ἐξέσται τόθ᾽ ὑμῖν 340
πλεῖν μένειν βινεῖν καθεύδειν,

ἐς πανηγύρεις θεωρεῖν,
ἑστιᾶσθαι κοτταβίζειν,
“συβαρίζειν”
ἰοῦ ἰοῦ κεκραγέναι.

Χορός
εἰ γὰρ ἐκγένοιτ᾽ ἰδεῖν ταύτην με τὴν ἡμέραν [ποτέ].
πολλὰ γὰρ ἀνεσχόμην πράγματά τε καὶ στιβάδας, ἃς
ἔλαχε Φορμίων·
κοὐκέτ᾽ ἄν μ᾽ εὕροις δικαστὴν δριμὺν οὐδὲ δύσκολον,
οὐδὲ τοὺς τρόπους γε δήπου σκληρὸν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ,
ἀλλ᾽ ἁπαλὸν ἄν μ᾽ ἴδοις καὶ πολὺ νεώτερον,
ἀπαλλαγέντα πραγμάτων.
καὶ γὰρ ἱκανὸν χρόνον ἀπολλύμεθα καὶ κατατετρίμμεθα πλανώμενοι
ἐς Λύκειον κἀκ Λυκείου ξὺν δορὶ ξὺν ἀσπίδι.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅ τι μάλιστα χαριούμεθα ποιοῦντες, ἄγε
φράζε· σὲ γὰρ αὐτοκράτορ᾽ εἵλετ᾽ ἀγαθή τις ἡμῖν τύχη.

Τρυγαῖος
φέρε δὴ κατίδω ποῖ τοὺς λίθους ἀφέλξομεν.

Ἑρμῆς
ὦ μιαρὲ καὶ τολμηρὲ τί ποιεῖν διανοεῖ;

Τρυγαῖος
οὐδὲν πονηρόν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅπερ καὶ Κιλλικῶν.

Ἑρμῆς
ἀπόλωλας ὦ κακόδαιμον.

Τρυγαῖος
οὐκοῦν ἢν λάχω.
Ἑρμῆς γὰρ ὢν κλήρῳ ποιήσεις οἷδ᾽ ὅτι.

Ἑρμῆς
ἀπόλωλας, ἐξόλωλας.

Τρυγαῖος
ἐς τίν᾽ ἡμέραν;

Ἑρμῆς
εἰς αὐτίκα μάλ᾽.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἠμπόληκά πω,
οὔτ᾽ ἄλφιτ᾽ οὔτε τυρόν, ὡς ἀπολούμενος.

Ἑρμῆς
καὶ μὴν ἐπιτέτριψαί γε.

Τρυγαῖος
κᾆτα τῷ τρόπῳ
οὐκ ᾐσθόμην ἀγαθὸν τοσουτονὶ λαβών;

Ἑρμῆς
ἆρ᾽ οἶσθα θάνατον ὅτι προεῖφ᾽ ὁ Ζεὺς ὃς ἂν
ταύτην ἀνορύττων εὑρεθῇ;

Τρυγαῖος
νῦν ἆρά με
ἅπασ᾽ ἀνάγκη ᾽στ᾽ ἀποθανεῖν;

Ἑρμῆς
εὖ ἴσθ᾽ ὅτι.

Τρυγαῖος
ἐς χοιρίδιόν μοί νυν δάνεισον τρεῖς δραχμάς·
δεῖ γὰρ μυηθῆναί με πρὶν τεθνηκέναι.

Ἑρμῆς
ὦ Ζεῦ κεραυνοβρόντα.

Τρυγαῖος
μὴ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν
ἡμῶν κατείπῃς, ἀντιβολῶ σε δέσποτα.

Ἑρμῆς
οὐκ ἂν σιωπήσαιμι.

Τρυγαῖος

ναὶ πρὸς τῶν κρεῶν,
ἀγὼ προθύμως σοι φέρων ἀφικόμην.

Ἑρμῆς
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ μέλ᾽ ὑπὸ τοῦ Διὸς ἀμαλδυνθήσομαι,
εἰ μὴ τετορήσω ταῦτα καὶ λακήσομαι.

Τρυγαῖος
μή νυν λακήσῃς, λίσσομαί σ᾽ ὦρμῄδιον.
εἰπέ μοι, τί πάσχετ᾽ ὦνδρες; ἕστατ᾽ ἐκπεπληγμένοι.
ὦ πόνηροι μὴ σιωπᾶτ᾽· εἰ δὲ μή, λακήσεται.

Χορός
μηδαμῶς ὦ δέσποθ᾽ Ἑρμῆ, μηδαμῶς, μηδαμῶς,
εἴ τι κεχαρισμένον χοιρίδιον οἶσθα παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ γε κατεδηδοκώς,
τοῦτο μὴ φαῦλον νόμιζ᾽ ἐν τῷδε τῷ <νῦν> πράγματι.

Τρυγαῖος
οὐκ ἀκούεις οἷα θωπεύουσί σ᾽ ὦναξ δέσποτα;

Χορός
“μὴ γένῃ παλίγκοτος ἀντιβολοῦσιν ἡμῖν”,
ὥστε τήνδε μὴ λαβεῖν·
ἀλλὰ χάρισ᾽ ὦ φιλανθρωπότατε καὶ μεγαλοδωρότατε δαιμόνων,
εἴ τι Πεισάνδρου βδελύττει τοὺς λόφους καὶ τὰς ὀφρῦς.
καί σε θυσίαισιν ἱεραῖσι προσόδοις τε μεγάλαισι
διὰ παντὸς ὦ δέσποτ᾽ ἀγαλοῦμεν ἡμεῖς ἀεί.

Τρυγαῖος
ἴθ᾽, ἀντιβολῶ σ᾽, ἐλέησον αὐτῶν τὴν ὄπα,
ἐπεί σε καὶ τιμῶσι μᾶλλον ἢ πρὸ τοῦ.
κλέπται γάρ εἰσι νῦν γε μᾶλλον ἢ πρὸ τοῦ.
καί σοι φράσω τι πρᾶγμα δεινὸν καὶ μέγα,
ὃ τοῖς θεοῖς ἅπασιν ἐπιβουλεύεται.

Ἑρμῆς
ἴθι δὴ κάτειπ᾽· ἴσως γὰρ ἂν πείσαις ἐμέ.

Τρυγαῖος

ἡ γὰρ Σελήνη χὠ πανοῦργος Ἥλιος
ὑμῖν ἐπιβουλεύοντε πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον
τοῖς βαρβάροισι προδίδοτον τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

Ἑρμῆς
ἵνα δὴ τί τοῦτο δρᾶτον;

Τρυγαῖος
ὁτιὴ νὴ Δία
ἡμεῖς μὲν ὑμῖν θύομεν, τούτοισι δὲ
οἱ βάρβαροι θύουσι. διὰ τοῦτ᾽ εἰκότως
βούλοιντ᾽ ἂν ἡμᾶς πάντας ἐξολωλέναι,
ἵνα τὰς τελετὰς λάβοιεν αὐτοὶ τῶν θεῶν.

Ἑρμῆς
ταῦτ᾽ ἄρα πάλαι τῶν ἡμερῶν παρεκλεπτέτην
καὶ τοῦ κύκλου παρέτρωγον ὑφ᾽ ἁμαρτωλίας.

Τρυγαῖος
ναὶ μὰ Δία. πρὸς ταῦτ᾽ ὦ φίλ᾽ Ἑρμῆ ξύλλαβε
ἡμῖν προθύμως τήνδε καὶ ξυνέλκυσον.
καί σοι τὰ μεγάλ᾽ ἡμεῖς Παναθήναι᾽ ἄξομεν
πάσας τε τὰς ἄλλας τελετὰς τὰς τῶν θεῶν,
μυστήρι᾽ Ἑρμῇ, Διιπόλει᾽, Ἀδώνια·
ἄλλαι τέ σοι πόλεις πεπαυμέναι κακῶν
ἀλεξικάκῳ θύσουσιν Ἑρμῇ πανταχοῦ.
χἄτερ᾽ ἔτι πόλλ᾽ ἔξεις ἀγαθά. πρῶτον δέ σοι
δῶρον δίδωμι τήνδ᾽, ἵνα σπένδειν ἔχῃς.

Ἑρμῆς
οἶμ᾽ ὡς ἐλεήμων εἶμ᾽ ἀεὶ τῶν χρυσίδων.

Τρυγαῖος
ὑμέτερον ἐντεῦθεν ἔργον ὦνδρες. ἀλλὰ ταῖς ἅμαις
εἰσιόντες ὡς τάχιστα τοὺς λίθους ἀφέλκετε.

Χορός
ταῦτα δράσομεν· σὺ δ᾽ ἡμῖν ὦ θεῶν σοφώτατε
ἅττα χρὴ ποιεῖν ἐφεστὼς φράζε δημιουργικῶς·

τἄλλα δ᾽ εὑρήσεις ὑπουργεῖν ὄντας ἡμᾶς οὐ κακούς.

Τρυγαῖος
ἄγε δὴ σὺ ταχέως ὕπεχε τὴν φιάλην, ὅπως
ἔργῳ ᾽φιαλοῦμεν εὐξάμενοι τοῖσιν θεοῖς.

Ἑρμῆς
σπονδὴ σπονδή·
εὐφημεῖτε εὐφημεῖτε.

Τρυγαῖος
σπένδοντες εὐχόμεσθα τὴν νῦν ἡμέραν
Ἕλλησιν ἄρξαι πᾶσι πολλῶν κἀγαθῶν,
χὤστις προθύμως ξυλλάβοι τῶν σχοινίων,
τοῦτον τὸν ἄνδρα μὴ λαβεῖν ποτ᾽ ἀσπίδα.

Χορός
μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἐν εἰρήνῃ διαγαγεῖν τὸν βίον,
ἔχονθ᾽ ἑταίραν καὶ σκαλεύοντ᾽ ἄνθρακας.

Τρυγαῖος
ὅστις δὲ πόλεμον μᾶλλον εἶναι βούλεται

Χορός
μηδέποτε παύσασθ᾽ αὐτὸν ὦ Διόνυσ᾽ ἄναξ
ἐκ τῶν ὀλεκράνων ἀκίδας ἐξαιρούμενον.

Τρυγαῖος
κεἴ τις ἐπιθυμῶν ταξιαρχεῖν σοὶ φθονεῖ
ἐς φῶς ἀνελθεῖν ᾧ πότνι᾽, ἐν ταῖσιν μάχαις

Χορός
πάσχοι γε τοιαῦθ᾽ οἷάπερ Κλεώνυμος.

Τρυγαῖος
κεἴ τις δορυξὸς ἢ κάπηλος ἀσπίδων,
ἵν᾽ ἐμπολᾷ βέλτιον, ἐπιθυμεῖ μαχῶν

Χορός
ληφθεὶς ὑπὸ λῃστῶν ἐσθίοι κριθὰς μόνας.

Τρυγαῖος
κεἴ τις στρατηγεῖν βουλόμενος μὴ ξυλλάβοι,
ἢ δοῦλος αὐτομολεῖν παρεσκευασμένος

Χορός
ἐπὶ τοῦ τροχοῦ γ᾽ ἕλκοιτο μαστιγούμενος.

Τρυγαῖος
ἡμῖν δ᾽ ἀγαθὰ γένοιτ᾽. ἰὴ παιὼν ἰή.

Χορός
ἄφελε τὸ παίειν ἀλλ᾽ ἰὴ μόνον λέγε.

Τρυγαῖος
ἰὴ ἰὴ τοίνυν, ἰὴ μόνον λέγω.
Ἑρμῇ Χάρισιν Ὥραισιν Ἀφροδίτῃ Πόθῳ.
Ἆρει δέ;

Χορός
μὴ μή.

Τρυγαῖος
μηδ᾽ Ἐνυαλίῳ γε;

Χορός
μή.

Τρυγαῖος
ὑπότεινε δὴ πᾶς καὶ κάταγε τοῖσιν κάλῳς.

Ἑρμῆς
ὦ εἶα.

Χορός
εἶα μάλα.

Ἑρμῆς
ὦ εἶα.

Χορός

εἶα ἔτι μάλα.

Ἑρμῆς
ὦ εἶα, ὦ εἶα.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ἕλκουσ᾽ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως.
οὐ ξυλλήψεσθ᾽; οἶ᾽ ὀγκύλλεσθ᾽· 465
οἰμώξεσθ᾽ οἱ Βοιωτοί.

Ἑρμῆς
εἶά νυν.

Τρυγαῖος
εἶα ὦ.

Χορός
<ἀλλ᾽> ἄγετε ξυνανέλκετε καὶ σφώ.

Τρυγαῖος
οὔκουν ἕλκω κἀξαρτῶμαι 470
κἀπεμπίπτω καὶ σπουδάζω;

Χορός
πῶς οὖν οὐ χωρεῖ τοὔργον;

Τρυγαῖος
ὦ Λάμαχ᾽ ἀδικεῖς ἐμποδὼν καθήμενος.
οὐδὲν δεόμεθ᾽ ὦνθρωπε τῆς σῆς μορμόνος.

Ἑρμῆς
οὐδ᾽ οἶδε γ᾽ εἶλκον οὐδὲν ἀργεῖοι πάλαι 475
ἀλλ᾽ ἢ κατεγέλων τῶν ταλαιπωρουμένων,
καὶ ταῦτα διχόθεν μισθοφοροῦντες ἅλφιτα.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ οἱ Λάκωνες ὦγάθ᾽ ἕλκουσ᾽ ἀνδρικῶς.

Χορός
ἆρ᾽ οἶσθ᾽ ὅσοι γ᾽ αὐτῶν ἔχονται τοῦ ξύλου,

μόνοι προθυμοῦντ᾽· ἀλλ᾽ ὁ χαλκεὺς οὐκ ἐᾷ. 480

Ἑρμῆς
οὐδ᾽ οἱ Μεγαρῆς δρῶσ᾽ οὐδέν· ἔλκουσιν δ᾽ ὅμως
γλισχρότατα σαρκάζοντες ὥσπερ κυνίδια,
ὑπὸ τοῦ γε λιμοῦ νὴ Δῖ ἐξολωλότες.

Τρυγαῖος
οὐδὲν ποιοῦμεν ὦνδρες· ἀλλ ὁμοθυμαδὸν
ἅπασιν ἡμῖν αὖθις ἀντιληπτέον. 485

Ἑρμῆς
ὦ εἶα.

Τρυγαῖος
εἶα μάλα.

Ἑρμῆς
ὦ εἶα.

Τρυγαῖος
εἶα νὴ Δία.

Χορός
μικρόν γε κινοῦμεν. 490

Τρυγαῖος
οὔκουν δεινὸν . . .
τοὺς μὲν τείνειν τοὺς δ᾽ ἀντισπᾶν;
πληγὰς λήψεσθ᾽ ὦργεῖοι.

Ἑρμῆς
εἶά νυν.

Τρυγαῖος
εἶα ὦ. 495

Χορός
ὡς κακόνοι τινές εἰσιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

Τρυγαῖος
ὑμεῖς μὲν γοῦν οἱ κιττῶντες
τῆς εἰρήνης σπᾶτ᾽ ἀνδρείως.

Χορός
ἀλλ᾽ εἴσ᾽ οἳ κωλύουσιν.

Ἑρμῆς
ἄνδρες Μεγαρῆς οὐκ ἐς κόρακας ἐρρήσετε;
μισεῖ γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἡ θεὸς μεμνημένη·
πρῶτοι γὰρ αὐτὴν τοῖς σκορόδοις ἠλείψατε.
καὶ τοῖς Ἀθηναίοισι παύσασθαι λέγω
ἐντεῦθεν ἐχομένοις ὅθεν νῦν ἕλκετε·
οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο δρᾶτε πλὴν δικάζετε.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴπερ ἐπιθυμεῖτε τήνδ᾽ ἐξελκύσαι,
πρὸς τὴν θάλατταν ὀλίγον ὑποχωρήσατε.

Χορός
ἄγ᾽ ὦνδρες αὐτοὶ δὴ μόνοι λαβώμεθ᾽ οἱ γεωργοί.

Ἑρμῆς
χωρεῖ γέ τοι τὸ πρᾶγμα πολλῷ μᾶλλον ὦνδρες ὑμῖν.

Χορός
χωρεῖν τὸ πρᾶγμά φησιν· ἀλλὰ πᾶς ἀνὴρ προθυμοῦ.

Τρυγαῖος
οἵ τοι γεωργοὶ τοὔργον ἐξέλκουσι κἄλλος οὐδείς.

Χορός
ἄγε νυν ἄγε πᾶς.

Ἑρμῆς
καὶ μὴν ὁμοῦ ᾽στιν ἤδη.

Χορός
μή νυν ἀνῶμεν ἀλλ᾽ ἐπεντείνωμεν
ἀνδρικώτερον.

Ἑρμῆς
ἤδη ᾽στὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἐκεῖνο.

Χορός
ὦ εἶα νῦν, ὦ εἶα πᾶς.
ὦ εἶα εἶα εἶα εἶα εἶα εἶα.
ὦ εἶα εἶα εἶα εἶα εἶα πᾶς.

Τρυγαῖος
ὦ πότνια βοτρυόδωρε τί προσείπω σ᾽ ἔπος;
πόθεν ἂν λάβοιμι ῥῆμα μυριάμφορον
ὅτῳ προσείπω σ᾽; οὐ γὰρ εἶχον οἴκοθεν.
ὦ χαῖρ᾽ Ὀπώρα, καὶ σὺ δ᾽ ὦ Θεωρία.
οἷον δ᾽ ἔχεις τὸ πρόσωπον ὦ Θεωρία,
οἷον δὲ πνεῖς, ὡς ἡδὺ κατὰ τῆς καρδίας,
γλυκύτατον ὥσπερ ἀστρατείας καὶ μύρου.

Ἑρμῆς
μῶν οὖν ὅμοιον καὶ γυλιοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ;

Τρυγαῖος
ἀπέπτυσ᾽ ἐχθροῦ φωτὸς ἔχθιστον πλέκος.
τοῦ μὲν γὰρ ὄζει κρομμυοξυρεγμίας,
ταύτης δ᾽ ὀπώρας, ὑποδοχῆς, Διονυσίων,
αὐλῶν, τραγῳδῶν, Σοφοκλέους μελῶν, κιχλῶν,
ἐπυλλίων Εὐριπίδου —

Ἑρμῆς
κλαύσᾰρα σὺ
ταύτης καταψευδόμενος· οὐ γὰρ ἥδεται
αὕτη ποιητῇ ῥηματίων δικανικῶν.

Τρυγαῖος
κιττοῦ, τρυγοίπου, προβατίων βληχωμένων,
“κόλπου” γυναικῶν διατρεχουσῶν εἰς ἀγρόν,
δούλης μεθυούσης, ἀνατετραμμένου χοῶς,
ἄλλων τε πολλῶν κἀγαθῶν —

Ἑρμῆς

ἴθι νυν ἄθρει
οἷον πρὸς ἀλλήλας λαλοῦσιν αἱ πόλεις
διαλλαγεῖσαι καὶ γελῶσιν ἄσμεναι,
καὶ ταῦτα δαιμονίως ὑπωπιασμέναι
ἀπαξάπασαι καὶ κυάθους προσκείμεναι.

Τρυγαῖος
καὶ τῶνδε τοίνυν τῶν θεωμένων σκόπει
τὰ πρόσωφ᾽, ἵνα γνῷς τὰς τέχνας.

Ἑρμῆς
αἰβοῖ τάλας,

Τρυγαῖος
ἐκεινονὶ γοῦν τὸν λοφοποιὸν οὐχ ὁρᾷς
τίλλονθ᾽ ἑαυτόν;

Ἑρμῆς
ὁ δέ γε τὰς σμινύας ποιῶν
κατέπαρδεν ἄρτι τοῦ ξιφουργοῦ ᾽κεινουί.

Τρυγαῖος
ὁ δὲ δρεπανουργὸς οὐχ ὁρᾷς ὡς ἥδεται,
καὶ τὸν δορυξὸν οἷον ἐσκιμάλισεν;

Ἑρμῆς
ἴθι νυν ἄνειπε τοὺς γεωργοὺς ἀπιέναι.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀκούετε λεῴ· τοὺς γεωργοὺς ἀπιέναι
τὰ γεωργικὰ σκεύη λαβόντας εἰς ἀγρὸν
ὡς τάχιστ᾽ ἄνευ δορατίου καὶ ξίφους κἀκοντίου·
ὡς ἅπαντ᾽ ἤδη ᾽στὶ μεστὰ τἀνθάδ᾽ εἰρήνης σαπρᾶς.
ἀλλὰ πᾶς χώρει πρὸς ἔργον εἰς ἀγρὸν παιωνίσας.

Χορός
ὦ ποθεινὴ τοῖς δικαίοις καὶ γεωργοῖς ἡμέρα,
ἄσμενός σ᾽ ἰδὼν προσειπεῖν βούλομαι τὰς ἀμπέλους,
τάς τε συκᾶς, ἃς ἐγὼ ᾽φύτευον ὢν νεώτερος,

ἀσπάσασθαι θυμὸς ἡμῖν ἐστι πολλοστῷ χρόνῳ.

Τρυγαῖος
νῦν μὲν οὖν ὦνδρες προσευξώμεσθα πρῶτον τῇ θεᾷ,
ἥπερ ἡμῶν τοὺς λόφους ἀφεῖλε καὶ τὰς Γοργόνας·
εἶθ᾽ ὅπως Λιταργιοῦμεν οἴκαδ᾽ ἐς τὰ χωρία,
ἐμπολήσαντές τι χρηστὸν εἰς ἀγρὸν ταρίχιον.

Ἑρμῆς
ὦ Πόσειδον ὡς καλὸν τὸ στῖφος αὐτῶν φαίνεται
καὶ πυκνὸν καὶ γοργὸν ὥσπερ μᾶζα καὶ πανδαισία.

Τρυγαῖος
νὴ Δΐ᾽ ἡ γὰρ σφῦρα λαμπρὸν ἦν ἄρ᾽ ἐξωπλισμένη,
αἵ τε θρίνακες διαστίλβουσι πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον.
ἦ καλῶς αὐτῶν ἀπαλλάξειεν ἂν μετόρχιον.

ὥστ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ ἤδη ᾽πιθυμῶ καὐτὸς ἐλθεῖν εἰς ἀγρὸν
καὶ τριαινοῦν τῇ δικέλλῃ διὰ χρόνου τὸ γῄδιον.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀναμνησθέντες ὦνδρες
τῆς διαίτης τῆς παλαιᾶς,
ἣν παρεῖχ᾽ αὕτη ποθ᾽ ἡμῖν,
τῶν τε παλασίων ἐκείνων
τῶν τε σύκων τῶν τε μύρτων,
τῆς τρυγός τε τῆς γλυκείας
τῆς ἰωνιᾶς τε τῆς πρὸς
τῷ φρέατι τῶν τ᾽ ἐλαῶν
ὧν ποθοῦμεν,
ἀντὶ τούτων τήνδε νυνὶ
τὴν θεὸν προσείπατε.

Χορός

χαῖρε χαῖρ᾽, ὡς ἀσμένοισιν ἦλθες, ὦ φιλτάτη.
σῷ γὰρ ἐδάμην πόθῳ, δαιμόνια βουλόμενος εἰς ἀγρὸν ἀνερπύσαι
*
ἦσθα γὰρ μέγιστον ἡμῖν κέρδος ὦ ποθουμένη
πᾶσιν ὁπόσοι γεωργὸν βίον ἐτρίβομεν.
μόνη γὰρ ἡμᾶς ὠφέλεις.
πολλὰ γὰρ ἐπάσχομεν πρίν ποτ᾽ ἐπὶ σοῦ γλυκέα κἀδάπανα καὶ φίλα.
τοῖς ἀγροίκοισιν γὰρ ἦσθα χῖδρα καὶ σωτηρία.
ὥστε σὲ τά τ᾽ ἀμπέλια καὶ τὰ νέα συκίδια
τἄλλα θ᾽ ὁπόσ᾽ ἔστι φυτὰ
προσγελάσεται λαβόντ᾽ ἄσμενα.
ἀλλὰ ποῦ ποτ᾽ ἦν ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν τὸν πολὺν τοῦτον χρόνον
ἥδε; τοῦθ᾽ ἡμᾶς δίδαξον ὦ θεῶν εὐνούστατε.

Ἑρμῆς

ὦ σοφώτατοι γεωργοί, τἀμὰ δὴ ξυνίετε
ῥήματ᾽, εἰ βούλεσθ᾽ ἀκοῦσαι τήνδ᾽ ὅπως ἀπώλετο.
πρῶτα μὲν γὰρ "αὐτῆς ἦρξεν" Φειδίας πράξας κακῶς·
εἶτα Περικλέης φοβηθεὶς μὴ μετάσχοι τῆς τύχης,
τὰς φύσεις ὑμῶν δεδοικὼς καὶ τὸν αὐτοδὰξ τρόπον,
πρὶν παθεῖν τι δεινὸν αὐτός, ἐξέφλεξε τὴν πόλιν.
ἐμβαλὼν σπινθῆρα μικρὸν Μεγαρικοῦ ψηφίσματος,
ἐξεφύσησεν τοσοῦτον πόλεμον ὥστε τῷ καπνῷ
πάντας Ἕλληνας δακρῦσαι, τούς τ᾽ ἐκεῖ τούς τ᾽ ἐνθάδε.

ὡς δ᾽ ἅπαξ “τὸ πρῶτον ἄκουσ᾽” ἐψόφησεν ἄμπελος
καὶ πίθος πληγεὶς ὑπ᾽ ὀργῆς ἀντελάκτισεν πίθῳ,
οὐκέτ᾽ ἦν οὐδεὶς ὁ παύσων, ἥδε δ᾽ ἠφανίζετο.

Τρυγαῖος
ταῦτα τοίνυν μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω ᾽γὼ ᾽πεπύσμην οὐδενός,
οὐδ᾽ ὅπως αὐτῇ προσήκοι Φειδίας ἠκηκόη.

Χορός
οὐδ᾽ ἔγωγε πλήν γε νυνί. ταῦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ εὐπρόσωπος ἦν,
οὖσα συγγενὴς ἐκείνου. πολλά γ᾽ ἡμᾶς λανθάνει.

Ἑρμῆς
κᾆτ᾽ ἐπειδὴ ᾽γνωσαν ὑμᾶς αἱ πόλεις ὧν ἤρχετε
ἠγριωμένους ἐπ᾽ ἀλλήλοισι καὶ σεσηρότας,
πάντ᾽ ἐμηχανῶντ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ὑμῖν τοὺς φόρους φοβούμεναι,
κἀνέπειθον τῶν Λακώνων τοὺς μεγίστους χρήμασιν.
οἱ δ᾽ ἄτ᾽ ὄντες αἰσχροκερδεῖς καὶ διειρωνόξενοι
τήνδ᾽ ἀπορρίψαντες αἰσχρῶς τὸν πόλεμον ἀνήρπασαν·
κᾆτα τἀκείνων γε κέρδη τοῖς γεωργοῖς ἦν κακά· 625
αἱ γὰρ ἐνθένδ᾽ αὖ τριήρεις ἀντιτιμωρούμεναι
οὐδὲν αἰτίων ἂν ἀνδρῶν τὰς κράδας κατήσθιον.

Τρυγαῖος
ἐν δίκῃ μὲν οὖν, ἐπεί τοι τὴν κορώνεών γέ μου
ἐξέκοψαν, ἣν ἐγὼ ᾽φύτευσα κἀξεθρεψάμην.

Χορός
νὴ Δί᾽ ὦ μέλ᾽ ἐνδίκως <γε> δῆτ᾽, ἐπεὶ κἀμοῦ λίθον 630
ἐμβαλόντες ἐξμέδιμνον κυψέλην ἀπώλεσαν.

Ἑρμῆς
κᾆτα δ᾽ ὡς ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν ξυνῆλθεν οὐργάτης λεώς,
τὸν τρόπον πωλούμενος τὸν αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐμάνθανεν,
ἀλλ᾽ ἄτ᾽ ὢν ἄνευ γιγάρτων καὶ φιλῶν τὰς ἰσχάδας
ἔβλεπεν πρὸς τοὺς λέγοντας· οἱ δὲ γιγνώσκοντες εὖ 635
τοὺς πένητας ἀσθενοῦντας κἀποροῦντας ἀλφίτων,
τήνδε μὲν δικροῖς ἐώθουν τὴν θεὸν κεκράγμασιν,
πολλάκις φανεῖσαν αὐτὴν τῆσδε τῆς χώρας πόθῳ,

τῶν δὲ συμμάχων ἔσειον τοὺς παχεῖς καὶ πλουσίους,
αἰτίας ἂν προστιθέντες, ὡς φρονεῖ τὰ Βρασίδου.
εἶτ᾽ ἂν ὑμεῖς τοῦτον ὥσπερ κυνίδι᾽ ἐσπαράττετε·
ἡ πόλις γὰρ ὠχριῶσα κἀν φόβῳ καθημένη,
ἅττα διαβάλοι τις αὐτῇ, ταῦτ᾽ ἂν ἥδιστ᾽ ἤσθιεν.
οἳ δὲ τὰς πληγὰς ὁρῶντες ἃς ἐτύπτονθ᾽ οἱ ξένοι
χρυσίῳ τῶν ταῦτα ποιούντων ἐβύνουν τὸ στόμα,
ὥστ᾽ ἐκείνους μὲν ποιῆσαι πλουσίους, ἡ δ᾽ Ἑλλὰς ἂν
ἐξερημωθεῖσ᾽ ἂν ὑμᾶς ἔλαθε. ταῦτα δ᾽ ἦν ὁ δρῶν
βυρσοπώλης.

Τρυγαῖος
παῦε παῦ᾽ ὦ δέσποθ᾽ Ἑρμῆ, μὴ λέγε,
ἀλλ᾽ ἔα τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἐκεῖνον οὗπερ ἔστ᾽ εἶναι κάτω·
οὐ γὰρ ἡμέτερος ἔτ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ ἀλλὰ σός.
ἄττ᾽ ἂν οὖν λέγῃς ἐκεῖνον,
κεἰ πανοῦργος ἦν, ὅτ᾽ ἔζη,
καὶ λάλος καὶ συκοφάντης
καὶ κύκηθρον καὶ τάρακτρον,
ταῦθ᾽ ἁπαξάπαντα νυνὶ
τοὺς σεαυτοῦ λοιδορεῖς.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅ τι σιωπᾷς ὦ πότνια κάτειπέ μοι.

Ἑρμῆς
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἂν εἴποι πρός γε τοὺς θεωμένους·
ὀργὴν γὰρ αὐτοῖς ὧν ἔπαθε πολλὴν ἔχει.

Τρυγαῖος
ἡ δ᾽ ἀλλὰ πρὸς σὲ μικρὸν εἰπάτω μόνον.

Ἑρμῆς
εἴφ᾽ ὅ τι νοεῖς αὐτοῖσι πρὸς ἔμ᾽ ὦ φιλτάτη.
ἴθ᾽ ὦ γυναικῶν μισοπορπακιστάτη.
εἶεν, ἀκούω. ταῦτ᾽ ἐπικαλεῖς; μανθάνω.
ἀκούσαθ᾽ ὑμεῖς ὧν ἕνεκα μομφὴν ἔχει.
ἐλθοῦσά φησιν αὐτομάτη μετὰ τἀν Πύλῳ
σπονδῶν φέρουσα τῇ πόλει κίστην πλέαν
ἀποχειροτονηθῆναι τρὶς ἐν τἠκκλησίᾳ.

Τρυγαῖος
ἡμάρτομεν ταῦτ᾽· ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην ἔχε·
ὁ νοῦς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἦν τότ᾽ ἐν τοῖς σκύτεσιν.

Ἑρμῆς
ἴθι νυν ἄκουσον οἷον ἄρτι μ᾽ ἤρετο,
ὅστις κακόνους αὐτῇ μάλιστ᾽ ἦν ἐνθάδε,
χὥστις φίλος κἄσπευδεν εἶναι μὴ μάχας.

Τρυγαῖος
εὐνούστατος μὲν ἦν μακρῷ Κλεώνυμος.

Ἑρμῆς
ποῖός τις οὖν εἶναι δοκεῖ τὰ πολεμικὰ
ὁ Κλεώνυμος;

Τρυγαῖος
ψυχήν γ᾽ ἄριστος πλήν γ᾽ ὅτι
οὐκ ἦν ἄρ᾽ οὗπέρ φησιν εἶναι τοῦ πατρός.
εἰ γάρ ποτ᾽ ἐξέλθοι στρατιώτης, εὐθέως
ἀποβολιμαῖος τῶν ὅπλων ἐγίγνετο.

Ἑρμῆς
ἔτι νῦν ἄκουσον οἷον ἄρτι μ᾽ ἤρετο,
ὅστις κρατεῖ νῦν τοῦ λίθου τοῦ ᾽ν τῇ πυκνί.

Τρυγαῖος
Ὑπέρβολος νῦν τοῦτ᾽ ἔχει τὸ χωρίον.
αὕτη τί ποιεῖς; τὴν κεφαλὴν ποῖ περιάγεις;

Ἑρμῆς
ἀποστρέφεται τὸν δῆμον ἀχθεσθεῖσ᾽ ὅτι
αὐτῷ πονηρὸν προστάτην ἐπεγράψατο.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ αὐτῷ χρησόμεθ᾽ οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ νῦν
ἀπορῶν ὁ δῆμος ἐπιτρόπου καὶ γυμνὸς ὢν
τοῦτον τέως τὸν ἄνδρα περιεζώσατο.

Ἑρμῆς
πῶς οὖν ξυνοίσει ταῦτ᾽ ἐρωτᾷ τῇ πόλει.

Τρυγαῖος
εὐβουλότεροι γενησόμεθα.

Ἑρμῆς
τρόπῳ τίνι;

Τρυγαῖος
ὅτι τυγχάνει λυχνοποιὸς ὤν. πρὸ τοῦ μὲν οὖν
ἐψηλαφῶμεν ἐν σκότῳ τὰ πράγματα,
νυνὶ δ᾽ ἅπαντα πρὸς λύχνον βουλεύσομεν.

Ἑρμῆς
ὦ ὤ,
οἷά μ᾽ ἐκέλευσεν ἀναπυθέσθαι σου.

Τρυγαῖος
τὰ τί;

Ἑρμῆς
πάμπολλα καὶ τἀρχαῖ᾽ ἃ κατέλιπεν τότε·
πρῶτον δ᾽ ὅ τι πράττει Σοφοκλέης ἀνήρετο.

Τρυγαῖος
εὐδαιμονεῖ, πάσχει δὲ θαυμαστόν.

Ἑρμῆς
τὸ τί;

Τρυγαῖος
ἐκ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους γίγνεται Σιμωνίδης.

Ἑρμῆς
Σιμωνίδης; πῶς;

Τρυγαῖος
ὅτι γέρων ὢν καὶ σαπρὸς
κέρδους ἕκατι κἂν ἐπὶ ῥιπὸς πλέοι.

Ἑρμῆς
τί δαί; Κρατῖνος ὁ σοφὸς ἔστιν;

Τρυγαῖος
ἀπέθανεν
ὅθ᾽ οἱ Λάκωνες ἐνέβαλον.

Ἑρμῆς
τί παθών;

Τρυγαῖος
ὅ τι;
ὠρακιάσας· οὐ γὰρ ἐξηνέσχετο
ἰδὼν πίθον καταγνύμενον οἴνου πλέων.
χἄτερα πόσ᾽ ἄττ᾽ οἴει γεγενῆσθ᾽ ἐν τῇ πόλει;
ὥστ᾽ οὐδέποτ᾽ ὦ δέσποιν᾽ ἀφησόμεσθά σου.

Ἑρμῆς
ἴθι νυν ἐπὶ τούτοις τὴν Ὀπώραν λάμβανε
γυναῖκα σαυτῷ τήνδε· κᾆτ᾽ ἐν τοῖς ἀγροῖς
ταύτῃ ξυνοικῶν ἐκποιοῦ σαυτῷ βότρυς.

Τρυγαῖος
ὦ φιλτάτη δεῦρ᾽ ἐλθὲ καὶ δός μοι κύσαι.
ἆρ᾽ ἂν βλαβῆναι διὰ χρόνου τί σοι δοκῶ
ὦ δέσποθ᾽ Ἑρμῆ τῆς Ὀπώρας κατελάσας;

Ἑρμῆς
οὐκ εἴ γε κυκεῶν᾽ ἐπιπίοις βληχωνίαν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα τήνδε τὴν Θεωρίαν
ἀπάγαγε τῇ βουλῇ λαβών, ἥσπέρ ποτ᾽ ἦν.

Τρυγαῖος
ὦ μακαρία βουλὴ σὺ τῆς Θεωρίας,
ὅσον ῥοφήσει ζωμὸν ἡμερῶν τριῶν,
ὅσας δὲ κατέδει ξόλικας ἑφθὰς καὶ κρέα.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ φίλ᾽ Ἑρμῆ χαῖρε πολλά.

Ἑρμῆς

·καὶ σύ γε
ὦνθρωπε χαίρων ἄπιθι καὶ μέμνησό μου.

Τρυγαῖος
ὦ κάνθαρ᾽ οἴκαδ᾽ οἴκαδ᾽ ἀποπετώμεθα. 720

Ἑρμῆς
οὐκ ἐνθάδ᾽ ὦ τᾶν ἔστι.

Τρυγαῖος
ποῖ γὰρ οἴχεται;

Ἑρμῆς
ὑφ᾽ ἅρματ᾽ ἐλθὼν Ζηνὸς ἀστραπηφορεῖ.

Τρυγαῖος
πόθεν οὖν ὁ τλήμων ἐνθάδ᾽ ἕξει σιτία;

Ἑρμῆς
τὴν τοῦ Γανυμήδους ἀμβροσίαν σιτήσεται.

Τρυγαῖος
πῶς δῆτ᾽ ἐγὼ καταβήσομαι; 725

Ἑρμῆς
θάρρει, καλῶς·
τῃδὶ παρ᾽ αὐτὴν τὴν θεόν.

Τρυγαῖος
δεῦρ᾽ ὦ κόραι
ἕπεσθον ἅμ᾽ ἐμοὶ θᾶττον, ὡς πολλοὶ πάνυ
ποθοῦντες ὑμᾶς ἀναμένουσ᾽ ἐστυκότες.

Χορός
ἀλλ᾽ ἴθι χαίρων· ἡμεῖς δὲ τέως τάδε τὰ σκεύη παραδόντες
τοῖς ἀκολούθοις δῶμεν σῴζειν, ὡς εἰώθασι μάλιστα 730
περὶ τὰς σκηνὰς πλεῖστοι κλέπται κυπτάζειν καὶ κακοποιεῖν.
ἀλλὰ φυλάττετε ταῦτ᾽ ἀνδρείως· ἡμεῖς δ᾽ αὖ τοῖσι θεαταῖς
ἣν ἔχομεν ὁδὸν λόγων εἴπωμεν ὅσα τε νοῦς ἔχει.
Χορός

χρῆν μὲν τύπτειν τοὺς ῥαβδούχους, εἴ τις κωμῳδοποιητὴς
αὐτὸν ἐπῄνει πρὸς τὸ θέατρον παραβὰς ἐν τοῖς ἀναπαίστοις· 735
εἰ δ᾽ οὖν εἰκός τινα τιμῆσαι, θύγατερ Διός, ὅστις ἄριστος
κωμῳδοδιδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων καὶ κλεινότατος γεγένηται,
ἄξιος εἶναί φησ᾽ εὐλογίας μεγάλης ὁ διδάσκαλος ἡμῶν.
πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τοὺς ἀντιπάλους μόνος ἀνθρώπων κατέπαυσεν
ἐς τὰ ῥάκια σκώπτοντας ἀεὶ καὶ τοῖς φθειρσὶν πολεμοῦντας, 740
τούς θ᾽ Ἡρακλέας τοὺς μάττοντας καὶ τοὺς πεινῶντας ἐκείνους
ἐξήλασ᾽ ἀτιμώσας πρῶτος, καὶ τοὺς δούλους παρέλυσεν
τοὺς φεύγοντας κἀξαπατῶντας καὶ τυπτομένους ἐπίτηδες,
οὓς ἐξῆγον κλάοντας ἀεί, καὶ τούτους οὕνεκα τουδί,
ἵν᾽ ὁ σύνδουλος σκώψας αὐτοῦ τὰς πληγὰς εἶτ᾽ ἀνέροιτο, 745
“ὦ κακόδαιμον τί τὸ δέρμ᾽ ἔπαθες; μῶν ὑστριχὶς εἰσέβαλέν σοι
ἐς τὰς πλευρὰς πολλῇ στρατιᾷ κἀδενδροτόμησε τὸ νῶτον;”
τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀφελὼν κακὰ καὶ φόρτον καὶ βωμολοχεύματ᾽ ἀγεννῆ
ἐποίησε τέχνην μεγάλην ἡμῖν κἀπύργωσ᾽ οἰκοδομήσας
ἔπεσιν μεγάλοις καὶ διανοίαις καὶ σκώμμασιν οὐκ ἀγοραίοις, 750
οὐκ ἰδιώτας ἀνθρωπίσκους κωμῳδῶν οὐδὲ γυναῖκας,
ἀλλ᾽ Ἡρακλέους ὀργήν τιν᾽ ἔχων τοῖσι μεγίστοις ἐπεχείρει,
διαβὰς βυρσῶν ὀσμὰς δεινὰς κἀπειλὰς βορβοροθύμους,
καὶ πρῶτον μὲν μάχομαι πάντων αὐτῷ τῷ καρχαρόδοντι,
οὗ δεινόταται μὲν ἀπ᾽ ὀφθαλμῶν Κύννης ἀκτῖνες ἔλαμπον, 755
ἑκατὸν δὲ κύκλῳ κεφαλαὶ κολάκων οἰμωξομένων ἐλιχμῶντο
περὶ τὴν κεφαλήν, φωνὴν δ᾽ εἶχεν χαράδρας ὄλεθρον τετοκυίας,
φώκης δ᾽ ὀσμήν, Λαμίας ὄρχεις ἀπλύτους, πρωκτὸν δὲ καμήλου.
τοιοῦτον ἰδὼν τέρας οὐ κατέδεισ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν πολεμίζων
ἀντεῖχον ἀεὶ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων νήσων. ὧν οὕνεκα νυνὶ 760
ἀποδοῦναί μοι τὴν χάριν ὑμᾶς εἰκὸς καὶ μνήμονας εἶναι.
καὶ γὰρ πρότερον πράξας κατὰ νοῦν οὐχὶ παλαίστρας περινοστῶν
παῖδας ἐπείρων, ἀλλ᾽ ἀράμενος τὴν σκευὴν εὐθὺς ἐχώρουν,
παῦρ᾽ ἀνιάσας, πόλλ᾽ εὐφράνας, πάντα παρασχὼν τὰ δέοντα.

Χορός

πρὸς ταῦτα χρεὼν εἶναι μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ 765
καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ τοὺς παῖδας·
καὶ τοῖς φαλακροῖσι παραινοῦμεν
ξυσπουδάζειν περὶ τῆς νίκης.
πᾶς γάρ τις ἐρεῖ νικῶντος ἐμοῦ
κἀπὶ τραπέζῃ καὶ ξυμποσίοις, 770

“φέρε τῷ φαλακρῷ, δὸς τῷ φαλακρῷ
τῶν τρωγαλίων, καὶ μἀφαίρει
γενναιοτάτου τῶν ποιητῶν
ἀνδρὸς τὸ μέτωπον ἔχοντος”. 773β

Χορός
Μοῦσα σὺ μὲν πολέμους ἀπωσαμένη μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ
τοῦ φίλου χόρευσον,
κλείουσα θεῶν τε γάμους ἀνδρῶν τε δαῖτας
καὶ θαλίας μακάρων· σοὶ γὰρ τάδ᾽ ἐξ ἀρχῆς μέλει.
ἢν δέ σε Καρκίνος ἐλθὼν
ἀντιβολῇ μετὰ τῶν παίδων χορεῦσαι,
μήθ᾽ ὑπάκουε μήτ᾽ ἔλθῃς
συνέριθος αὐτοῖς,
ἀλλὰ νόμιζε πάντας
ὄρτυγας οἰκογενεῖς γυλιαύχενας ὀρχηστὰς
ναννοφυεῖς σφυράδων ἀποκνίσματα μηχανοδίφας.
καὶ γὰρ ἔφασχ᾽ ὁ πατὴρ ὃ παρ᾽ ἐλπίδας
εἶχε τὸ δρᾶμα γαλῆν τῆς ἑσπέρας ἀπάγξαι.

Χορός
τοιάδε χρὴ Χαρίτων δαμώματα καλλικόμων
τὸν σοφὸν ποιητὴν
ὑμνεῖν, ὅταν ἠρινὰ μὲν φωνῇ χελιδὼν
ἑζομένη κελαδῇ, χορὸν δὲ μὴ ᾽χῃ Μόρσιμος
μηδὲ Μελάνθιος, οὗ δὴ
πικροτάτην ὄπα γηρύσαντος ἤκουσ᾽
ἡνίκα τῶν τραγῳδῶν
τὸν χορὸν εἶχον ἀδελφός
τε και αὐτός, ἄμφω
Γοργόνες ὀψοφάγοι βατιδοσκόποι Ἅρπυιαι,
γραοσόβαι μιαροὶ τραγομάσχαλοι ἰχθυολῦμαι·
ὧν καταχρεμψαμένη μέγα καὶ πλατὺ
Μοῦσα θεὰ μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ ξύμπαιζε τὴν ἑορτήν.

Τρυγαῖος
ὡς χαλεπὸν ἐλθεῖν ἦν ἄρ᾽ εὐθὺ τῶν θεῶν.
ἔγωγέ τοι πεπόνηκα κομιδῇ τὼ σκέλει.
μικροὶ δ᾽ ὁρᾶν ἄνωθεν ἦστ᾽. ἔμοιγέ τοι

ἀπὸ τοὐρανοῦ ᾽φαίνεσθε κακοήθεις πάνυ,
ἐντευθενὶ δὲ πολύ τι κακοηθέστεροι.

Οἰκέτης
ὦ δέσποθ᾽ ἥκεις;

Τρυγαῖος
ὡς ἐγὼ ᾽πυθόμην τινός.

Οἰκέτης
τί δ᾽ ἔπαθες;

Τρυγαῖος
ἤλγουν τὼ σκέλει μακρὰν ὁδὸν
διεληλυθώς.

Οἰκέτης
ἴθι νυν κάτειπέ μοι —

Τρυγαῖος
τὸ τί;

Οἰκέτης
ἄλλον τιν᾽ εἶδες ἄνδρα κατὰ τὸν ἀέρα
πλανώμενον πλὴν σαυτόν;

Τρυγαῖος
οὔκ, εἰ μή γέ που
ψυχὰς δύ᾽ ἢ τρεῖς διθυραμβοδιδασκάλων.

Οἰκέτης
τί δ᾽ ἔδρων;

Τρυγαῖος
ξυνελέγοντ᾽ ἀναβολὰς ποτώμεναι
τὰς ἐνδιαεριαυερινηχέτους τινάς.

Οἰκέτης
οὐκ ἦν ἄρ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἃ λέγουσι, κατὰ τὸν ἀέρα
ὡς ἀστέρες γιγνόμεθ᾽, ὅταν τις ἀποθάνῃ;

Τρυγαῖος
μάλιστα.

Οἰκέτης
καὶ τίς ἐστιν ἀστὴρ νῦν ἐκεῖ;

Τρυγαῖος
Ἴων ὁ Χῖος, ὅσπερ ἐποίησεν πάλαι
ἐνθάδε τὸν ἀοῖόν ποθ᾽· ὡς δ᾽ ἦλθ᾽, εὐθέως
ἀοῖον αὐτὸν πάντες ἐκάλουν ἀστέρα.

Οἰκέτης
τίνες γάρ εἰσ᾽ οἱ διατρέχοντες ἀστέρες,
οἳ καόμενοι θέουσιν;

Τρυγαῖος
ἀπὸ δείπνου τινὲς
τῶν πλουσίων οὗτοι βαδίζουσ᾽ ἀστέρων,
ἱπνοὺς ἔχοντες, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἱπνοῖσι πῦρ.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴσαγ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα ταυτηνὶ λαβών,
καὶ τὴν πύελον κατάκλυζε καὶ θέρμαιν᾽ ὕδωρ,
στόρνυ τ᾽ ἐμοὶ καὶ τῇδε κουρίδιον λέχος.
καὶ ταῦτα δράσας ἧκε δεῦρ᾽ αὖθις πάλιν·
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀποδώσω τήνδε τῇ βουλῇ τέως.

Οἰκέτης
πόθεν δ᾽ ἔλαβες ταύτας;

Τρυγαῖος
ὁπόθεν; ἐκ τοὐρανοῦ.

Οἰκέτης
οὐκ ἂν ἔτι δοίην τῶν θεῶν τριώβολον,
εἰ πορνοβοσκοῦσ᾽ ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς οἱ βροτοί.

Τρυγαῖος
οὔκ, ἀλλὰ κἀκεῖ ζῶσιν ἀπὸ τούτων τινές.
ἄγε νυν ἴωμεν.

Οἰκέτης
εἰπέ μοι, δῶ καταφαγεῖν
ταύτῃ τι;

Τρυγαῖος
μηδέν· οὐ γὰρ ἐθελήσει θαγεῖν
οὔτ᾽ ἄρτον οὔτε μᾶζαν, εἰωθυῖ᾽ ἀεὶ
παρὰ τοῖς θεοῖσιν ἀμβροσίαν λείχειν ἄνω.

Οἰκέτης
λείχειν ἄρ᾽ αὐτῇ κἀνθάδε σκευαστέον. 855

Χορός
εὐδαιμονικῶς γ᾽ ὁ πρεσβύτης,
ὅσα γ᾽ ὦδ᾽ ἰδεῖν,
τὰ νῦν τάδε πράττει.

Τρυγαῖος
τί δῆτ᾽ ἐπειδὰν νυμφίον μ᾽ ὁρᾶτε λαμπρὸν ὄντα;

Χορός
ζηλωτὸς ἔσει, γέρον, 860
αὖθις νέος ὢν πάλιν,
μύρῳ κατάλειπτος.

Τρυγαῖος
οἶμαι. τί δῆθ᾽ ὅταν ξυνὼν τῶν τιτθίων ἔχωμαι;

Χορός
εὐδαιμονέστερος φανεῖ τῶν Καρκίνου στροβίλων.

Τρυγαῖος
οὔκουν δικαίως; ὅστις εἰς 865
ὄχημα κανθάρου ᾽πιβὰς 865β
ἔσωσα τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ὥστ᾽
ἐν τοῖς ἀγροῖσιν αὐτοὺς 866β
ἅπαντας ὄντας ἀσφαλῶς
βινεῖν τε καὶ καθεύδειν. 867β

Οἰκέτης
ἡ παῖς λέλουται καὶ τὰ τῆς πυγῆς καλά·
ὁ πλακοῦς πέπεπται, σησαμῆ ξυμπλάττεται.
καὶ τἄλλ᾽ ἀπαξάπαντα· τοῦ πέους δὲ δεῖ. 870

Τρυγαῖος
ἴθι νυν ἀποδῶμεν τήνδε τὴν Θεωρίαν
ἀνύσαντε τῇ βουλῇ.

Οἰκέτης
τίς αὐτηί;

Τρυγαῖος
τί φῄς;
αὕτη Θεωρία ᾽στίν.

Οἰκέτης
ἣν ἡμεῖς ποτε
ἐπαίομεν Βραυρωνάδ᾽ ὑποπεπωκότες;

Τρυγαῖος
σάφ᾽ ἴσθι, κἀλήφθη γε μόλις. 875

Οἰκέτης
ὦ δέσποτα

ὅσην ἔχει τὴν πρωκτοπεντετηρίδα.

Τρυγαῖος
εἶεν, τίς ἐσθ᾽ ὑμῶν δίκαιος, τίς ποτε;
τίς διαφυλάξει τήνδε τῇ βουλῇ λαβών;
οὗτος τί περιγράφεις;

Οἰκέτης
τὸ δεῖν᾽ εἰς Ἴσθμια
σκηνὴν ἐμαυτοῦ τῷ πέει καταλαμβάνω.

Τρυγαῖος
οὔπω λέγεθ᾽ ὑμεῖς τίς ὁ φυλάξων. δεῦρο σύ·
καταθήσομαι γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐς μέσους ἄγων.

Οἰκέτης
ἐκεινοσὶ νεύει.

Τρυγαῖος
τίς;

Οἰκέτης
ὅστις; Ἀριφράδης,
ἄγειν παρ᾽ αὐτὸν ἀντιβολῶν.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ μέλε
τὸν ζωμὸν αὐτῆς προσπεσὼν ἐκλάψεται.
ἄγε δὴ σὺ κατάθου πρῶτα τὰ σκεύη χαμαί.
βουλή, πρυτάνεις, ὁρᾶτε τὴν Θεωρίαν.
σκέψασθ᾽ ὅσ᾽ ὑμῖν ἀγαθὰ παραδώσω φέρων,
ὥστ᾽ εὐθέως ἄραντας ὑμᾶς τὼ σκέλει
ταύτης μετέωρα καταγαγεῖν ἀνάρρυσιν.
τουτὶ δ᾽ ὁρᾶτ᾽ ὀπτάνιον ἡμῖν ὡς καλόν.

Οἰκέτης
διὰ ταῦτα καὶ κεκάπνικ᾽ ἄρ᾽· ἐνταυθοῖ γὰρ <οὖν>
πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου τὰ λάσανα τῇ βουλῇ ποτ᾽ ἦν.

Τρυγαῖος
ἔπειτ᾽ ἀγῶνά γ᾽ εὐθὺς ἐξέσται ποιεῖν
ταύτην ἔχουσιν αὔριον καλὸν πάνυ,
ἐπὶ γῆς παλαίειν, τετραποδηδὸν ἑστάναι,
πλαγίαν καταβάλλειν, ἐς γόνατα κύβδ᾽ ἑστάναι,
καὶ παγκράτιόν γ᾽ ὑπαλειψαμένοις νεανικῶς
παίειν ὀρύττειν πὺξ ὁμοῦ καὶ τῷ πέει·
τρίτῃ δὲ μετὰ ταῦθ᾽ ἱπποδρομίαν ἄξετε,
ἵνα δὴ κέλης κέλητα παρακελητιεῖ,
ἅρματα δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀλλήλοισιν ἀνατετραμμένα
φυσῶντα καὶ πνέοντα προσκινήσεται·
ἕτεροι δὲ κείσονταί γ᾽ ἀπεψωλημένοι
περὶ ταῖσι καμπαῖς ἡνίοχοι πεπτωκότες.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ πρυτάνεις δέχεσθε τὴν Θεωρίαν.
θέασ᾽ ὡς προθύμως ὁ πρύτανις παρεδέξατο.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἂν εἴ τι προῖκα προσαγαγεῖν σ᾽ ἔδει,
ἀλλ᾽ ηὖρον ἄν σ᾽ ὑπέχοντα τὴν ἐκεχειρίαν.

Χορός
ἦ χρηστὸς ἀνὴρ πολίτης
ἐστὶν ἅπασιν ὅστις
γ᾽ ἐστὶ τοιοῦτος.

Τρυγαῖος
ὅταν τρυγᾶτ᾽, εἴσεσθε πολλῷ μᾶλλον οἷός εἰμι.

Χορός
καὶ νῦν σύ γε δῆλος εἶ·
σωτὴρ γὰρ ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις
γεγένησαι.

Τρυγαῖος
φήσεις ἐπειδὰν ἐκπίῃς οἴνου νέου λεπαστήν.

Χορός
καὶ πλήν γε τῶν θεῶν ἀεί σ᾽ ἡγησόμεσθα πρῶτον.

Τρυγαῖος
πολλῶν γὰρ ὑμῖν ἄξιος

Τρυγαῖος ἀθμονεὺς ἐγώ,
δεινῶν ἀπαλλάξας πόνων 920
τὸν δημότην ὅμιλον, 920β
καὶ τὸν γεωργικὸν λεὼν
Ὑπέρβολόν τε παύσας. 921β

Οἰκέτης
ἄγε δὴ τί νῷν ἐντευθενὶ ποιητέον;

Τρυγαῖος
τί δ᾽ ἄλλο γ᾽ ἢ ταύτην χύτραις ἱδρυτέον;

Χορός
χύτραισιν, ὥσπερ μεμφόμενον Ἑρμῆδιον;

Τρυγαῖος
τί δαὶ δοκεῖ; βούλεσθε λαρινῷ βοΐ; 925

Χορός
βοΐ; μηδαμῶς, ἵνα μὴ βοηθεῖν ποι δέῃ.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ ὑὶ παχείᾳ καὶ μεγάλῃ;

Χορός
μὴ μή.

Τρυγαῖος
τιή;

Χορός
ἵνα μὴ γένηται Θεογένους ὑηνία.

Τρυγαῖος
τῷ δὴ δοκεῖ σοι δῆτα τῶν λοιπῶν;

Χορός
ὀί.

Τρυγαῖος

ὀί; 930

Χορός
ναὶ μὰ Δί᾽.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γ᾽ ἔστ᾽ Ἰωνικὸν
τὸ ῥῆμ᾽.

Χορός
ἐπίτηδές γ᾽, ἵν᾽ <ὅταν> ἐν τἠκκλησίᾳ
ὡς χρὴ πολεμεῖν λέγῃ τις, οἱ καθήμενοι
ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους λέγωσ᾽ Ἰωνικῶς ὀὶ —

Τρυγαῖος
εὖ τοι λέγεις.

Χορός
καὶ τἄλλα γ᾽ ὦσιν ἤπιοι.
ὥστ᾽ ἐσόμεθ᾽ ἀλλήλοισιν ἀμνοὶ τοὺς τρόπους 935
καὶ τοῖσι συμμάχοισι πρᾳότεροι πολύ.

Τρυγαῖος
ἴθι νυν ἄγ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα τὸ πρόβατον λαβών·
ἐγὼ δὲποριῶ βωμὸν ἐφ᾽ ὅτου θύσομεν.

Χορός
ὡς πάνθ᾽ ὅσ᾽ ἂν θεὸς θέλῃ χἠ τύχη κατορθοῖ,
χωρεῖ κατὰ νοῦν, ἕτερον δ᾽ ἑτέρῳ 940
τούτων κατὰ καιρὸν ἀπαντᾷ.

Τρυγαῖος
ὡς ταῦτα δῆλά γ᾽ ἔσθ᾽· ὁ γὰρ βωμὸς θύρασι καὶ δή.

Χορός
ἐπείγετέ νυν ἐν ὅσῳ
σοβαρὰ θεόθεν κατέχει
πολέμου μετάτροπος αὔρα. 945
νῦν γὰρ δαίμων φανερῶς

εἰς ἀγαθὰ μεταβιβάζει.

Τρυγαῖος
τὸ κανοῦν πάρεστ᾽ ὀλὰς ἔχον καὶ στέμμα καὶ μάχαιραν,
καὶ πῦρ γε τουτί, κοὐδὲν ἴσχει πλὴν τὸ πρόβατον ὑμᾶς.

Χορός
οὔκουν ἀμιλλήσεσθον; ὡς
ἣν Χαῖρις ὑμᾶς ἴδῃ,
πρόσεισιν αὐλήσων ἄκλητος,
κᾆτα τοῦτ᾽ εὖ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι
φυσῶντι καὶ πονουμένῳ
προσδώσετε δήπου.

Τρυγαῖος
ἄγε δὴ τὸ κανοῦν λαβὼν σὺ καὶ τὴν χέρνιβα
περίιθι τὸν βωμὸν ταχέως ἐπιδέξια.

Οἰκέτης
ἰδού· λεγοις ἂν ἄλλο· περιελήλυθα.

Τρυγαῖος
φέρε δὴ τὸ δαλίον τόδ᾽ ἐμβάψω λαβών,
σείου σὺ ταχέως· σὺ δὲ πρότεινε τῶν ὀλῶν,
καὐτός γε χερνίπτου παραδοὺς ταύτην ἐμοί,
καὶ τοῖς θεαταῖς ῥῖπτε τῶν κριθῶν.

Οἰκέτης
ἰδού.

Τρυγαῖος
ἔδωκας ἤδη;

Οἰκέτης
νὴ τὸν Ἑρμῆν ὥστε γε
τούτων ὅσοιπέρ εἰσι τῶν θεωμένων
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐ κριθὴν ἔχει.

Τρυγαῖος

οὐχ αἱ γυναῖκές γ᾽ ἔλαβον.

Οἰκέτης
ἀλλ᾽ εἰς ἑσπέραν
δώσουσιν αὐταῖς ἄνδρες.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ εὐχώμεθα.
τίς τῇδε; ποῦ ποτ᾽ εἰσὶ πολλοὶ κἀγαθοί;

Οἰκέτης
τοισδὶ φέρε δῶ· πολλοὶ γάρ εἰσι κἀγαθοί.

Τρυγαῖος
τούτους ἀγαθοὺς ἐνόμισας; 970

Οἰκέτης
οὐ γάρ, οἵτινες
ἡμῶν καταχεόντων ὕδωρ τοσουτονὶ
ἐς ταὐτὸ τοῦθ᾽ ἑστᾶσ᾽ ἰόντες χωρίον;

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστ᾽ εὐχώμεθ᾽.

Χορός
εὐχώμεσθα δή.

Τρυγαῖος
ὦ σεμνοτάτη βασίλεια θεὰ
πότνι᾽ Εἰρήνη, 975
δέσποινα χορῶν, δέσποινα γάμων,
δέξαι θυσίαν τὴν ἡμετέραν.

Χορός
δέξαι δῆτ᾽ ὦ πολυτιμήτη
νὴ Δία, καὶ μὴ ποίει γ᾽ ἅπερ αἱ
μοιχευόμεναι δρῶσι γυναῖκες. 980
καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖναι παρακλίνασαι
τῆς αὐλείας παρακύπτουσιν,

κἄν τις προσέχῃ τὸν νοῦν αὐταῖς
ἀναχωροῦσιν,
κᾆτ᾽ ἢν ἀπίῃ παρακύπτουσιν.
τούτων σὺ ποίει μηδὲν ἔθ᾽ ἡμᾶς.

Τρυγαῖος
μὰ Δῖ ἀλλ᾽ ἀπόφηνον ὅλην σαυτὴν
γενναιοπρεπῶς τοῖσιν ἐρασταῖς
ἡμῖν, οἵ σου τρυχόμεθ᾽ ἤδη
τρία καὶ δέκ᾽ ἔτη,
λῦσον δὲ μάχας καὶ κορκορυγάς,
ἵνα Λυσιμάχην σε καλῶμεν.
παῦσον δ᾽ ἡμῶν τὰς ὑπονοίας
τὰς περικόμψους,
αἷς στωμυλλόμεθ᾽ εἰς ἀλλήλους·
μεῖξον δ᾽ ἡμᾶς τοὺς Ἕλληνας
πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς
φιλίας χυλῷ καὶ συγγνώμῃ
τινὶ πραοτέρᾳ κέρασον τὸν νοῦν·
καὶ τὴν ἀγορὰν ἡμῖν ἀγαθῶν
ἐμπλησθῆναι, μεγάλων σκορόδων,
σικύων πρῴων, μήλων, ῥοιῶν.
δούλοισι χλανισκιδίων μικρῶν·
κἀκ Βοιωτῶν γε φέροντας ἰδεῖν
χῆνας νήττας φάττας τροχίλους·
καὶ Κωπάδων ἐλθεῖν σπυρίδας,
καὶ περὶ ταύτας ἡμᾶς ἀθρόους
ὀψωνοῦντας τυρβάζεσθαι
Μορύχῳ Τελέᾳ Γλαυκέτῃ, ἄλλοις
τένθαις πολλοῖς· κᾆτα Μελάνθιον
ἥκειν ὕστερον ἐς τὴν ἀγοράν,
τὰς δὲ πεπρᾶσθαι, τὸν δ᾽ ὀτοτύζειν,
εἶτα μονῳδεῖν ἐκ Μηδείας,
“ὀλόμαν ὀλόμαν, ἀποχηρωθεὶς
τᾶς ἐν τεύτλοισι λοχευομένας”·
τοὺς δ᾽ ἀνθρώπους ἐπιχαίρειν.
Τρυγαῖος
ταῦτ᾽ ὦ πολυτίμητ᾽ εὐχομένοις ἡμῖν δίδου.

Οἰκέτης
λαβὲ τὴν μάχαιραν· εἶθ᾽ ὅπως μαγειρικῶς
σφάξεις τὸν οἶν.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ θέμις.

Οἰκέτης
τιὴ τί δή;

Τρυγαῖος
οὐχ ἥδεται δήπουθεν Εἰρήνη σφαγαῖς,
οὐδ᾽ αἱματοῦται βωμός. ἀλλ᾽ εἴσω φέρων
θύσας τὰ μηρἵ ἐξελὼν δεῦρ᾽ ἔκφερε,
χοὔτω τὸ πρόβατον τῷ χορηγῷ σῴζεται.

Χορός
σέ τοι θύρασι χρὴ . . . μένοντα τοίνυν
σχίζας δευρὶ τιθέναι ταχέως
τά τε πρόσφορα πάντ᾽ ἐπὶ τούτοις.

Τρυγαῖος
οὔκουν δοκῶ σοι μαντικῶς τὸ φρύγανον τίθεσθαι;

Χορός
πῶς δ᾽ οὐχί; τί γάρ σε πέφευγ᾽
ὅσα χρὴ σοφὸν ἄνδρα; τί δ᾽ οὐ
σὺ φρονεῖς ὁπόσα χρεών ἐστιν
τόν γε σοφῇ δόκιμον
φρενὶ πορίμῳ τε τόλμῃ;

Τρυγαῖος
ἡ σχίζα γοῦν ἐνημμένη τὸν Στιλβίδην πιέζει,
καὶ τὴν τράπεζαν οἴσομαι, καὶ παιδὸς οὐ δεήσει.

Χορός
τίς οὖν ἂν οὐκ ἐπαινέσειεν
ἄνδρα τοιοῦτον, ὅστις
πόλλ᾽ ἀνατλὰς ἔσωσε

τὴν ἱερὰν πόλιν;
ὥστ᾽ οὐχὶ μὴ παύσῃ ποτ᾽ ὢν
ζηλωτὸς ἅπασιν.

Οἰκέτης
ταυτὶ δέδραται. τίθεσο τὼ μηρὼ λαβών.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐπὶ σπλάγχν᾽ εἶμι καὶ θυλήματα.

Τρυγαῖος
ἐμοὶ μελήσει ταῦτά γ᾽· ἀλλ᾽ ἥκειν ἐχρῆν.

Οἰκέτης
ἰδοὺ πάρειμι. μῶν ἐπισχεῖν σοι δοκῶ;

Τρυγαῖος
ὄπτα καλῶς νυν αὐτά· καὶ γὰρ οὐτοσὶ
προσέρχεται δάφνῃ τις ἐστεφανωμένος.
τίς ἄρα ποτ᾽ ἐστίν;

Οἰκέτης
ὡς ἀλαζὼν φαίνεται·
μάντις τίς ἐστιν.

Τρυγαῖος
οὐ μὰ Δῖ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ Ἱεροκλέης
οὗτός γέ πού ᾽σθ᾽ ὁ χρησμολόγος οὐξ Ὠρεοῦ.

Οἰκέτης
τί ποτ᾽ ἄρα λέξει;

Τρυγαῖος
δῆλός ἐσθ᾽ οὗτός γ᾽ ὅτι
ἐναντιώσεταί τι ταῖς διαλλαγαῖς.

Οἰκέτης
οὔκ, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν κνῖσαν εἰσελήλυθεν.

Τρυγαῖος
μή νυν ὁρᾶν δοκῶμεν αὐτόν.

Οἰκέτης
εὖ λέγεις.

Ἱεροκλῆς
τίς ἡ θυσία ποθ᾽ αὐτηὶ καὶ τῷ θεῶν;

Τρυγαῖος
ὀπτα σὺ σιγῇ κἄπαγ᾽ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀσφύος.

Ἱεροκλῆς
ὅτῳ δὲ θύετ᾽ οὐ φράσεθ᾽;

Τρυγαῖος
ἡ κέρκος ποιεῖ
καλῶς;

Οἰκέτης
καλῶς δῆτ᾽ ὦ πότνι᾽ Εἰρήνη φίλη.

Ἱεροκλῆς
ἄγε νυν ἀπάρχου κᾆτα δὸς τἀπάργματα.

Τρυγαῖος
ὀπτᾶν ἄμεινον πρῶτον.

Ἱεροκλῆς
ἀλλὰ ταυταγὶ
ἤδη ᾽στὶν ὀπτά.

Τρυγαῖος
πολλὰ πράττεις, ὅστις εἶ.
κατάτεμνε. ποῦ τράπεζα; τὴν σπονδὴν φέρε.

Ἱεροκλῆς
ἡ γλῶττα χωρὶς τέμνεται.

Τρυγαῖος
μεμνήμεθα.
ἀλλ᾽ οἶσθ᾽ ὃ δρᾶσον;

Ἱεροκλῆς
ἦν φράσῃς.

Τρυγαῖος
μὴ διαλέγου
νῷν μηδέν· Εἰρήνῃ γὰρ ἱερὰ θύομεν.

Ἱεροκλῆς
ὦ μέλεοι θνητοὶ καὶ νήπιοι,

Τρυγαῖος
ἐς κεφαλὴν σοί.

Ἱεροκλῆς
οἵτινες ἀφραδίῃσι θεῶν νόον οὐκ ἀίοντες
συνθήκας πεποίησθ᾽ ἄνδρες χαροποῖσι πιθήκοις, 1065

Τρυγαῖος
αἰβοιβοῖ.

Ἱεροκλῆς
τί γελᾷς;

Τρυγαῖος
ἥσθην χαροποῖσι πιθήκοις.

Ἱεροκλῆς
καὶ κέπφοι τρήρωνες ἀλωπεκιδεῦσι πέπεισθε,
ὧν δόλιαι ψυχαί, δόλιαι φρένες.

Τρυγαῖος
εἴθε σου εἶναι
ὤφελεν ὖλαζὼν οὐτωσὶ θερμὸς ὁ πλεύμων.

Ἱεροκλῆς
εἰ γὰρ μὴ νύμφαι γε θεαὶ Βάκιν ἐξαπάτασκον, 1070
μηδὲ Βάκις θνητούς, μηδ᾽ αὖ νύμφαι Βάκιν αὐτὸν —

Τρυγαῖος
ἐξώλης ἀπόλοι᾽, εἰ μὴ παύσαιο βακίζων.

Ἱεροκλῆς
οὔπω θέσφατον ἦν Εἰρήνης δέσμ᾽ ἀναλῦσαι,
ἀλλὰ τόδε πρότερον —

Τρυγαῖος
τοῖσδ᾽ ἁλσί γε παστέα ταυτί.

Ἱεροκλῆς
οὐ γάρ πω τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ φίλον μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν,
φυλόπιδος λῆξαι, πρίν κεν λύκος οἶν ὑμεναιοῖ.

Τρυγαῖος
καὶ πῶς ὦ κατάρατε λύκος ποτ᾽ ἂν οἶν ὑμεναιοῖ;

Ἱεροκλῆς
ὡς ἡ σφονδύλη φεύγουσα πονηρότατον βδεῖ,
"χὴ κώδων" ἀκαλανθὶς ἐπειγομένη τυφλὰ τίκτει,
τουτάκις οὔπω χρῆν τὴν εἰρήνην πεποιῆσθαι.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλὰ τί χρῆν ἡμᾶς; οὐ παύσασθαι πολεμοῦντας,
ἢ διακαυνιάσαι πότεροι κλαυσούμεθα μεῖζον,
ἐξὸν σπεισαμένοις κοινῇ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἄρχειν;

Ἱεροκλῆς
οὔποτε ποιήσεις τὸν καρκίνον ὀρθὰ βαδίζειν.

Τρυγαῖος
οὔποτε δειπνήσεις ἔτι τοῦ λοιποῦ ν᾽ πρυτανείῳ,
οὐδ᾽ ἐπὶ τῷ πραχθέντι ποιήσεις ὕστερον οὐδέν.

Ἱεροκλῆς
οὐδέποτ᾽ ἂν θείης λεῖον τὸν τραχὺν ἐχῖνον.

Τρυγαῖος
ἆρα φενακίζων ποτ᾽ Ἀθηναίους ἔτι παύσει;

Ἱεροκλῆς
ποῖον γὰρ κατὰ χρησμὸν ἐκαύσατε μῆρα θεοῖσιν;

Τρυγαῖος
ὅνπερ κάλλιστον δήπου πεποίηκεν Ὅμηρος·
“ὣς οἱ μὲν νέφος ἐχθρὸν ἀπωσάμενοι πολέμοιο
Εἰρήνην εἵλοντο καὶ ἱδρύσανθ᾽ ἱερείῳ.
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατὰ μῆρ᾽ ἐκάη καὶ σπλάγχν᾽ ἐπάσαντο,
ἔσπενδον δεπάεσσιν· ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὁδὸν ἡγεμόνευον”·
χρησμολόγῳ δ᾽ οὐδεὶς ἐδίδου κώθωνα φαεινόν.

Ἱεροκλῆς
οὐ μετέχω τούτων· οὐ γὰρ ταῦτ᾽ εἶπε Σίβυλλα.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ ὁ σοφός τοι νὴ Δί᾽ Ὅμηρος δεξιὸν εἶπεν·
“ἀφρήτωρ ἀθέμιστος ἀνέστιός ἐστιν ἐκεῖνος,
ὃς πολέμου ἔραται ἐπιδημίου ὀκρυόεντος”.

Ἱεροκλῆς
φράζεο δὴ μή πώς σε δόλῳ φρένας ἐξαπατήσας
ἰκτῖνος μάρψῃ.

Τρυγαῖος
τουτὶ μέντοι σὺ φυλάττου,
ὡς οὗτος φοβερὸς τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ἐστὶν ὁ χρησμός.
ἔγχει δὴ σπονδὴν καὶ τῶν σπλάγχνων φέρε δευρί.

Ἱεροκλῆς
ἀλλ᾽ εἰ ταῦτα δοκεῖ, κἀγὼ ᾽μαυτῷ βαλανεύσω.

Τρυγαῖος
σπονδὴ σπονδή.

Ἱεροκλῆς
ἔγχει δὴ κἀμοὶ καὶ σπλάγχνων μοῖραν ὄρεξον.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ οὔπω τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ φίλον μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν·
ἀλλὰ τόδε πρότερον, σπένδειν ἡμᾶς, σὲ δ᾽ ἀπελθεῖν.
ὦ πότνι᾽ Εἰρήνη παράμεινον τὸν βίον ἡμῖν.

Ἡροκλῆς
πρόσφερε τὴν γλῶτταν.

Τρυγαῖος
σὺ δὲ τὴν σαυτοῦ γ᾽ ἀπένεγκε.

Ἡροκλῆς
σπονδή.

Τρυγαῖος
καὶ ταυτὶ μετὰ τῆς σπονδῆς λαβὲ θᾶττον.

Ἡροκλῆς
οὐδεὶς προσδώσει τῶν σπλάγχνων;

Τρυγαῖος
οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε
ἡμῖν προσδιδόναι, πρίν κεν λύκος οἶν ὑμεναιοῖ.

Ἡροκλῆς
ναὶ πρὸς τῶν γονάτων.

Τρυγαῖος
ἄλλως ὦ τᾶν ἱκετεύεις·
οὐ γὰρ ποιήσεις λεῖον τὸν τραχὺν ἐχῖνον.
ἄγε δὴ θεαταὶ δεῦρο συσπλαγχνεύετε
μετὰ νῷν.

Ἡροκλῆς
τί δὴ ᾽γώ;

Τρυγαῖος
τὴν Σίβυλλαν ἔσθιε.

Ἡροκλῆς
οὗτοι μὰ τὴν γῆν ταῦτα κατέδεσθον μόνω,
ἀλλ᾽ ἁρπάσομαι σφῷν αὐτά· κεῖται δ᾽ ἐν μέσῳ.

Τρυγαῖος
ὦ παῖε τὸν Βάκιν.

Ἱεροκλῆς
μαρτύρομαι.

Τρυγαῖος
κἄγωγ᾽ ὅτι τένθης εἶ σὺ κἀλαζὼν ἀνήρ.
παῖ αὐτὸν ἐπέχων τῷ ξύλῳ τὸν ἀλαζόνα.

Οἰκέτης
σὺ μὲν οὖν· ἐγὼ δὲ τουτονὶ τῶν κῳδίων,
ἁλάμβαν᾽ αὐτὸς ἐξαπατῶν, ἐκβολβιῶ.
οὐ καταβαλεῖς τὰ κῴδι᾽ ὦ θυηπόλε;
ἤκουσας; ὁ κόραξ οἷος ἦλθ᾽ ἐξ Ὠρεοῦ.
οὐκ ἀποπετήσει θᾶττον εἰς Ἐλύμνιον;

Χορός
ἥδομαί γ᾽ ἥδομαι
κράνους ἀπηλλαγμένος
τυροῦ τε καὶ κρομμύων.
οὐ γὰρ φιληδῶ μάχαις,
ἀλλὰ πρὸς πῦρ διέλκων
μετ᾽ ἀνδρῶν ἑταίρων φίλων,
ἐκκέας τῶν ξύλων ἅττ᾽ ἂν ᾖ
δανότατα τοῦ θέρους
“ἐκπεπρισμένα”,
κἀνθρακίζων τοὐρεβίνθου
τήν τε φηγὸν ἐμπυρεύων,
χἄμα τὴν Θρᾷτταν κυνῶν
τῆς γυναικὸς λουμένης.

Χορός
οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ᾽ ἥδιον ἢ τυχεῖν μὲν ἤδη ᾽σπαρμένα,
τὸν θεὸν δ᾽ ἐπιψακάζειν, καὶ τιν᾽ εἰπεῖν γείτονα,
εἰπέ μοι τί τηνικαῦτα δρῶμεν ὦ Κωμαρχίδη;
ἐμπιεῖν ἔμοιγ᾽ ἀρέσκει τοῦ θεοῦ δρῶντος καλῶς.
ἀλλ᾽ ἄφευε τῶν φασήλων ὦ γύναι τρεῖς χοίνικας,
τῶν τε πυρῶν μεῖξον αὐτοῖς, τῶν τε σύκων ἔξελε,
τόν τε Μανῆν ἡ Σύρα βωστρησάτω κ᾽ τοῦ χωρίου.
οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τ᾽ ἐστὶ πάντως οἰναρίζειν τήμερον
οὐδὲ τυντλάζειν, ἐπειδὴ παρδακὸν τὸ χωρίον.

κἀξ ἐμοῦ δ᾽ ἐνεγκάτω τις τὴν κίχλην καὶ τὼ σπίνω·
ἦν δὲ καὶ πυός τις ἔνδον καὶ λαγῷα τέτταρα,
εἴ τι μὴ ᾽ξήνεγκεν αὐτῶν ἡ γαλῆ τῆς ἐσπέρας·
ἐψόφει γοῦν ἔνδον οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ἄττα κἀκυδοιδόπα·
ὧν ἔνεγκ᾽ ὦ παῖ τρῖ ἡμῖν, ἓν δὲ δοῦναι τῷ πατρί·
μυρρίνας τ᾽ αἴτησον ἐξ Αἰσχινάδου τῶν καρπίμων·
χἄμα τῆς αὐτῆς ὁδοῦ Χαρινάδην τις βωσάτω,

Χορός
ὡς ἂν ἐμπίῃ μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν,
εὖ ποιοῦντος κὠφελοῦντος
τοῦ φεοῦ τἀρώματα.

Χορός
ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν δ᾽ ἀχέτας
ᾄδῃ τὸν ἡδὺν νόμον,
διασκοπῶν ἥδομαι
τὰς Λημυνίας ἀμπέλους,
εἰ πεπαίνουσιν ἤ-
δη (τὸ γὰρ φῖτυ πρῷον φύσει),
τόν τε φήληχ᾽ ὁρῶν οἰδάνοντ᾽· 1165
εἶθ᾽ ὁπόταν ᾖ πέπων,
ἐσθίω κἀπέχω
χἄμα φήμ᾽, "ὦραι φίλαι"· καὶ
τοῦ θύμου τρίβων κυκῶμαι·
κᾆτα γίγνομαι παχὺς
τηνικαῦτα τοῦ θέρους

Χορός
μᾶλλον ἢ θεοῖσιν ἐχθρὸν ταξίαρχον προσβλέπων
τρεῖς λόφους ἔχοντα καὶ φοινικίδ᾽ ὀξεῖαν πάνυ,
ἣν ἐκεῖνός φησιν εἶναι βάμμα Σαρδιανικόν·
ἣν δέ που δέῃ μάχεσθ᾽ ἔχοντα τὴν φοινικίδα,
τηνικαῦτ᾽ αὐτὸς βέβαπται βάμμα Κυζικηνικόν·
κᾆτα φεύγει πρῶτος ὥσπερ ξουθὸς ἱππαλεκτρυὼν
τοὺς λόφους σείων· ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἔστηκα "λινοπτώμενος".
ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν δ᾽ οἴκοι γένωνται, δρῶσιν οὐκ ἀνασχετά,
τοὺς μὲν ἐγγράφοντες ἡμῶν τοὺς δ᾽ ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω
ἐξαλείφοντες δὶς ἢ τρίς. αὔριον δ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ἡ ᾽ξοδος·

τῷ δὲ σιτί᾽ οὐκ ἐώνητ᾽· οὐ γὰρ ᾔδειν ἐξιών·
εἶτα προστὰς πρὸς τὸν ἀνδριάντα τὸν Πανδίονος
εἶδεν αὐτόν, κἀπορῶν θεῖ τῷ κακῷ βλέπων ὀπόν.
ταῦτα δ᾽ ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀγροίκους δρῶσι, τοὺς δ᾽ ἐξ ἄστεως
ἧττον, οἱ θεοῖσιν οὗτοι κἀνδράσιν ῥιψάσπιδες.
ὧν ἔτ᾽ εὐθύνας ἐμοὶ δώσουσιν, ἢν θεὸς θέλῃ.

Χορός
πολλὰ γὰρ δή μ᾽ ἠδίκησαν,
ὄντες οἴκοι μὲν λέοντες
ἐν μάχῃ δ᾽ ἀλώπεκες.

Τρυγαῖος
ἰοὺ ἰού.
ὅσον τὸ χρῆμ᾽ ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἦλθ᾽ ἐς τοὺς γάμους.
ἔχ᾽ ἀποκάθαιρε τὰς τραπέζας ταυτηί·
πάντως γὰρ οὐδὲν ὄφελός ἐστ᾽ αὐτῆς ἔτι.
ἔπειτ᾽ ἐπιφόρει τοὺς ἀμύλους καὶ τὰς κίχλας
καὶ τῶν λαγῴων πολλὰ καὶ τοὺς κολλάβους.

Δρεπανουργός
ποῦ ποῦ Τρυγαῖός ἐστιν;

Τρυγαῖος
ἀναβράττω κίχλας.

Δρεπανουργός
ὦ φίλτατ᾽ ὦ Τρυγαῖ᾽ ὅσ᾽ ἡμᾶς τἀγαθὰ
δέδρακας εἰρήνην ποιήσας· ὡς πρὸ τοῦ
οὐδεὶς ἐπρίατ᾽ ἂν δρέπανον οὐδὲ κολλύβου,
νυνὶ δὲ πεντήκοντα δραχμῶν ἐμπολῶ·
ὁδὶ δὲ τριδράχμους τοὺς κάδους ἐς τοὺς ἀγρούς.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ Τρυγαῖε τῶν δρεπάνων τε λάμβανε
καὶ τῶνδ᾽ ὅ τι βούλει προῖκα· καὶ ταυτὶ δέχου·
ἀφ᾽ ὧν γὰρ ἀπεδόμεσθα κἀκερδήναμεν
τὰ δῶρα ταυτί σοι φέρομεν ἐς τοὺς γάμους.

Τρυγαῖος
ἴθι νυν καταθέμενοι παρ᾽ ἐμοὶ ταῦτ᾽ εἴσιτε

ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ὡς τάχιστα· καὶ γὰρ οὐτοσὶ
ὅπλων κάπηλος ἀχθόμενος προσέρχεται.

Λοφοποιός
οἴμ᾽ ὡς προθέλυμνόν μ᾽ ὦ Τρυγαῖ ἀπώλεσας.

Τρυγαῖος
τί δ᾽ ἔστιν ὦ κακόδαιμον; οὔτι που λοφᾷς;

Λοφοποιός
ἀπώλεσάς μου τὴν τέχνην καὶ τὸν βίον,
καὶ τουτουὶ καὶ τοῦ δορυξοῦ ᾽κεινονί.

Τρυγαῖος
τί δῆτα τουτοινὶ καταθῶ σοι τοῖν λόφοιν;

Λοφοποιός
αὐτὸς σὺ τί δίδως;

Τρυγαῖος
ὅ τι δίδωμ᾽; αἰσχύνομαι.
ὅμως δ᾽ ὅτι τὸ σφήκωμ᾽ ἔχει πόνον πολύν,
δοίην ἂν αὐτοῖν ἰσχάδων τρεῖς χοίνικας.
ἵν᾽ ἀποκαθαίρω τὴν τράπεζαν τουτῳί.

Λοφοποιός
ἔνεγκε τοίνυν εἰσιὼν τὰς ἰσχάδας·
κρεῖττον γὰρ ὦ τᾶν ἐστιν ἢ μηδὲν λαβεῖν.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀπόφερ᾽ ἀπόφερ᾽ ἐς κόρακας ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας.
τριχορρυεῖτον, οὐδέν ἐστον τὼ λόφω.
οὐκ ἂν πριαίμην οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἰσχάδος μιᾶς.

Θωρακοπώλης
τί δαὶ δεκάμνῳ τῷδε θώρηκος κύτει
ἐνημμένῳ κάλλιστα χρήσομαι τάλας;

Τρυγαῖος
οὗτος μὲν οὐ μή σοι ποιήσει ζημίαν.

ἀλλ᾽ αἶρέ μοι τοῦτόν γε τῆς ἰσωνίας·
ἐναποπατεῖν γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἐπιτήδειος πάνυ —

Θωρακοπώλης
παῦσαί μ᾽ ὑβρίζων τοῖς ἐμοῖσι χρήμασιν.

Τρυγαῖος
ὠδὶ παραθέντι τρεῖς λίθους. οὐ δεξιῶς;

Θωρακοπώλης
ποίᾳ δ᾽ ἀποψήσει ποτ᾽ ὦμαθέστατε;

Τρυγαῖος
τῃδὶ διεὶς τὴν χεῖρα διὰ τῆς θαλαμιᾶς
καὶ τῇδ᾽.

Θωρακοπώλης
ἄμ᾽ ἀμφοῖν δῆτ᾽;

Τρυγαῖος
ἔγωγε νὴ Δία,
ἵνα μή γ᾽ ἁλῶ τρύπημα κλέπτων τῆς νεώς.

Θωρακοπώλης
ἔπειτ᾽ ἐπὶ δεκάμνῳ χεσεῖ καθήμενος;

Τρυγαῖος
ἔγωγε νὴ Δί᾽ ὦπίτριπτ᾽. οἴει γὰρ ἂν
τὸν πρωκτὸν ἀποδόσθαι με χιλιῶν δραχμῶν;

Θωρακοπώλης
ἴθι δὴ ᾽ξένεγκε τἀργύριον.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ ὦγαθὲ
θλίβει τὸν ὄρρον. ἀπόφερ᾽, οὐκ ὠνήσομαι.

Σαλπιγγοποιός
τί δ᾽ ἆρα τῇ σάλπιγγι τῇδε χρήσομαι,
ἣν ἐπριάμην δραχμῶν ποθ᾽ ἑξήκοντ᾽ ἐγώ;

Τρυγαῖος
μόλυβδον ἐς τουτὶ τὸ κοῖλον ἐγχέας
ἔπειτ᾽ ἄνωθεν ῥάβδον ἐνθεὶς ὑπόμακρον,
γενήσεταί σοι τῶν κατακτῶν κοττάβων.

Σαλπιγγοποιός
οἴμοι καταγελᾷς.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερον παραινέσω.
τὸν μὲν μόλυβδον, ὥσπερ εἶπον, ἔγχεον,
ἐντευθενὶ δὲ σπαρτίοις ἠρτημένην
πλάστιγγα πρόσθες, καὐτό σοι γενήσεται
τὰ σῦκ᾽ ἐν ἀγρῷ τοῖς οἰκέταισιν ἱστάναι.

Κρανοποιός
ὦ δυσκάθαρτε δαῖμον ὥς μ᾽ ἀπώλεσας,
ὅτ᾽ ἀντέδωκά γ᾽ ἀντὶ τῶνδε μνᾶν ποτέ·
καὶ νῦν τί δράσω; τίς γὰρ αὖτ᾽ ὠνήσεται;

Τρυγαῖος
πώλει βαδίζων αὐτὰ τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις·
ἔστιν γὰρ ἐπιτήδεια συρμαίαν μετρεῖν.

Δορυξός
οἴμ᾽ ὦ κρανοποί᾽ ὡς ἀθλίως πεπράγαμεν.

Τρυγαῖος
οὗτος μὲν οὐ πέπονθεν οὐδέν.

Δορυξός
ἀλλὰ τί
ἔτ᾽ ἐστὶ τοῖσι κράνεσιν ὅ τι τις χρήσεται;

Τρυγαῖος
ἐὰν τοιαυτασὶ μάθῃ λαβὰς ποιεῖν,
ἄμεινον ἢ νῦν αὖτ᾽ ἀποδώσεται πολύ.

Κρανοποιός

ἀπίωμεν ὦ δορυξέ. 1260

Τρυγαῖος
μηδαμῶς γ᾽, ἐπεὶ
τούτῳ γ᾽ ἐγὼ τὰ δόρατα ταῦτ᾽ ὠνήσομαι.

Δορυξός
πόσον δίδως δῆτ᾽;

Τρυγαῖος
εἰ διαπρισθεῖεν δίχα,
λάβοιμ᾽ ἂν αὖτ᾽ ἐς χάρακας ἑκατὸν τῆς δραχμῆς.

Δορυξός
ὑβριζόμεθα. χωρῶμεν ὦ τᾶν ἐκποδών.

Τρυγαῖος
νὴ τὸν Δί᾽, ὡς τὰ παιδί᾽ ἤδη ᾽ξέρχεται 1265
οὐρησόμενα τὰ τῶν ἐπικλήτων δεῦρ᾽, ἵνα
ἅττ᾽ ᾄσεται προαναβάληταί μοι δοκεῖ.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅ τι περ ᾄδειν ἐπινοεῖς ὦ παιδίον,
αὐτοῦ παρ᾽ ἐμὲ στὰν πρότερον ἀναβαλοῦ ᾽νθαδί.

Παῖς <Λαμάχου>
νῦν αὖθ᾽ ὁπλοτέρων ἀνδρῶν ἀρχώμεθα — 1270

Τρυγαῖος
παῦσαι
ὁπλοτέρους ᾄδον, καὶ ταῦτ ὦ τρισκακόδαιμον
εἰρήνης οὔσης· ἀμαθές γ᾽ εἶ καὶ κατάρατον.

Παῖς <Λαμάχου>
οἱ δ᾽ ὅτε δὴ σχεδὸν ἦσαν ἐπ᾽ ἀλλήλοισιν ἰόντες,
σύν ῥ᾽ ἔβαλον ῥινούς τε καὶ ἀσπίδας ὀμφαλοέσσας.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀσπίδας; οὐ παύσει μεμνημένος ἀσπίδος ἡμῖν; 1275

Παῖς <Λαμάχου>
ἔνθα δ᾽ ἄμ᾽ οἰμωγή τε καὶ εὐχωλὴ πέλεν ἀνδρῶν.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀνδρῶν οἰμωγή; κλαύσει νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον
οἰμωγὰς ἅδων, καὶ ταύτας ὀμφαλοέσσας.

Παῖς <Λαμάχου>
ἀλλὰ τί δῆτ᾽ ᾄδω; σὺ γὰρ εἰπέ μοι οἷστισι χαίρεις.

Τρυγαῖος
ὡς οἱ μὲν δαίνυντο βοῶν κρέα, καὶ τὰ τοιαυτί· 1280
ἄριστον προτίθεντο καὶ ἄτθ᾽ ἥδιστα πάσασθαι.

Παῖς <Λαμάχου>
ὡς οἱ μὲν δαίνυντο βοῶν κρέα, καὐχένας ἵππων
ἔκλυον ἱδρώοντας, ἐπεὶ πολέμου ἐκόρεσθεν.

Τρυγαῖος
εἶεν; ἐκόρεσθεν τοῦ πολέμου κᾆτ᾽ ἤσθιον.
ταῦτ᾽ ᾇδε, ταῦθ᾽, ὡς ἤσθιον κεκορημένοι. 1285

Παῖς <Λαμάχου>
θωρήσσοντ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ὄτειτα πεπαυμένοι —

Τρυγαῖος
ἄσμενοι, οἶμαι.

Παῖς <Λαμάχου>
πύργων δ᾽ ἐξεχέοντο, βοὴ δ᾽ ἄσβεστος ὀρώρει.

Τρυγαῖος
κάκιστ᾽ ἀπόλοιο παιδάριον αὐταῖς μάχαις·
οὐδὲν γὰρ ᾄδεις πλὴν πολέμους. τοῦ καί ποτ᾽ εἶ;

Παῖς <Λαμάχου>
ἐγώ; 1290

Τρυγαῖος
σὺ μέντοι νὴ Δί᾽.

Παῖς <Λαμάχου>
υἱὸς Λαμάχου.

Τρυγαῖος
αἰβοῦ·
ἦ γὰρ ἐγὼ θαύμαζον ἀκούων, εἰ σὺ μὴ εἴης
ἀνδρὸς βουλομάχου καὶ κλαυσιμάχου τινὸς υἱός.
ἄπερρε καὶ τοῖς λογχοφόροισιν ᾖδ᾽ ἰών.
ποῦ μοι τὸ τοῦ Κλεωνύμου ᾽στὶ παιδίον;
ᾖσον πρὶν εἰσιέναι τι· σὺ γὰρ εὖ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι
οὐ πράγματ᾽ ἄσει· σώφρονος γὰρ εἶ πατρός.

Παῖς <Κλεωνύμου>
ἀσπίδι μὲν Σαΐων τις ἀγάλλεται, ἣν παρὰ θάμνῳ
ἔντος ἀμώμητον κάλλιπον οὐκ ἐθέλων.

Τρυγαῖος
εἰπέ μοι ὦ πόσθων, ἐς τὸν σαυτοῦ πατέρ᾽ ᾄδεις;

Παῖς <Κλεωνύμου>
ψυχὴν δ᾽ ἐξεσάωσα —

Τρυγαῖος
κατήσχυνας δὲ τοκῆας.
ἀλλ᾽ εἰσίωμεν. εὖ γὰρ οἶδ᾽ ἐγὼ σαφῶς
ὅτι ταῦθ᾽ ὅσ᾽ ἦσας ἄρτι περὶ τῆς ἀσπίδος
οὐ μὴ ᾽πιλάθῃ ποτ᾽ ὢν ἐκείνου τοῦ πατρός.

Τρυγαῖος
ὑμῶν τὸ λοιπὸν ἔργον ἤδη ᾽νταῦθα τῶν μενόντων
φλᾶν ταῦτα πάντα καὶ σποδεῖν, καὶ μὴ κενὰς παρέλκειν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀνδρικῶς ἐμβάλλετε
καὶ σμώχετ᾽ ἀμφοῖν τοῖν γνάθοιν· οὐδὲν γὰρ ὦ πόνηροι
λευκῶν ὀδόντων ἔργον ἐστ᾽, ἢν μή τι καὶ μασῶνται.

Χορός
ἡμῖν μελήσει ταῦτά γ᾽· εὖ ποιεῖς δὲ καὶ σὺ φράζων.

Τρυγαῖος
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ πρὸ τοῦ πεινῶντες ἐμβάλλεσθε τῶν λαγῴων·
ὡς οὐχὶ πᾶσαν ἡμέραν
πλακοῦσιν ἔστιν ἐντυχεῖν πλανωμένοις ἐρήμοις.

πρὸς ταῦτα βρύκετ᾽ ἢ τάχ᾽ ἡμῖν φημι μεταμελήσειν.

Χορός
εὐφημεῖν χρὴ καὶ τὴν νύμφην ἔξω τινὰ δεῦρο κομίζειν
δᾷδάς τε φέρειν, καὶ πάντα λεὼν συγχαίρειν κἀπιχορεύειν.
καὶ τὰ σκεύη πάλιν ἐς τὸν ἀγρὸν νυνὶ χρὴ πάντα κομίζειν
ὀρχησαμένους καὶ σπείσαντας καὶ Ὑπέρβολον ἐξελάσαντας,

Χορός
κἀπευξαμένους τοῖσι θεοῖσιν
διδόναι πλοῦτον τοῖς Ἕλλησιν,
κριθάς τε ποιεῖν ἡμᾶς πολλὰς
πάντας ὁμοίως οἶνόν τε πολύν,
σῦκά τε τρώγειν,
τάς τε γυναῖκας τίκτειν ἡμῖν,
καὶ τἀγαθὰ πάνθ᾽ ὅσ᾽ ἀπωλέσαμεν
συλλέξασθαι πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς,
λῆξαί τ᾽ αἴθωνα σίδηρον.

Τρυγαῖος
δεῦρ᾽ ὦ γύναι εἰς ἀγρόν,
χὤπως μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ καλὴ
καλῶς κατακείσει.
Ὑμὴν Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ.

Ἡμιχόριον Β
ὦ τρὶς μάκαρ ὡς δικαίως
τἀγαθὰ νῦν ἔχεις.

Ἡμιχόριον Α
Ὑμὴν Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ.

Ἡμιχόριον Β
Ὑμὴν Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ.

Ἡμιχόριον Α
τί δράσομεν αὐτήν;

Ἡμιχόριον Β

τί δράσομεν αὐτήν;

Ἡμιχόριον Α
τρυγήσομεν αὐτήν,

Ἡμιχόριον Β
τρυγήσομεν αὐτήν.

Ἡμιχόριον Α
ἀλλ᾽ ἀράμενοι φέρωμεν
οἱ προτεταγμένοι
τὸν νυμφίον ὦνδρες.

Ἡμιχόριον Β
Ὑμὴν Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ,

Ἡμιχόριον Β
Ὑμὴν Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ,

Τρυγαῖος
οἰκήσετε γοῦν καλῶς
οὐ πράγματ᾽ ἔχοντες, ἀλλὰ
συκολογοῦντες.

Ἡμιχόριον Β
Ὑμὴν Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ,

Ἡμιχόριον Α
Ὑμὴν Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ.

Ἡμιχόριον Β
τοῦ μὲν μέγα καὶ παχύ.

Ἡμιχόριον Α
τῆς δ᾽ ἡδὺ τὸ σῦκον.

Τρυγαῖος
φήσεις γ᾽ ὅταν ἐσθίῃς
οἶνόν τε πίῃς πολύν.

Χορός
Ὑμὴν Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ,
Ὑμὴν Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ.

Τρυγαῖος
ὦ χαίρετε χαίρετ᾽ ἄνδρες,
κἂν ξυνέπησθέ μοι
πλακοῦντας ἔδεσθε.

THE BIRDS

Ἐυελπίδης

ὀρθὴν κελεύεις, ᾗ τὸ δένδρον φαίνεται;

Πισθέταιρος

διαρραγείης: ἥδε δ᾽ αὖ κρώζει πάλιν.

Ἐυελπίδης

τί ὦ πόνηρ᾽ ἄνω κάτω πλανύττομεν;
ἀπολούμεθ᾽ ἄλλως τὴν ὁδὸν προφορουμένω.

Πισθέταιρος

τὸ δ᾽ ἐμὲ κορώνῃ πειθόμενον τὸν ἄθλιον
ὁδοῦ περιελθεῖν στάδια πλεῖν ἢ χίλια.

Ἐυελπίδης

τὸ δ᾽ ἐμὲ κολοιῷ πειθόμενον τὸν δύσμορον
ἀποσποδῆσαι τοὺς ὄνυχας τῶν δακτύλων.

Πισθέταιρος

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὅπου γῆς ἐσμὲν οἶδ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ ἔτι.

Ἐυελπίδης

ἐντευθενὶ τὴν πατρίδ᾽ ἂν ἐξεύροις σύ που;

Πισθέταιρος

οὐδ᾽ ἂν μὰ Δία γ᾽ ἐντεῦθεν Ἐξηκεστίδης.

Ἐυελπίδης

οἴμοι.

Πισθέταιρος
σὺ μὲν ὦ τᾶν τὴν ὁδὸν ταύτην ἴθι.

Ἐυελπίδης

ἦ δεινὰ νὼ δέδρακεν οὐκ τῶν ὀρνέων,
ὁ πινακοπώλης φιλοκράτης μελαγχολῶν,
ὃς τώδ᾽ ἔφασκε νῷν φράσειν τὸν Τηρέα
τὸν ἔποφ᾽ ὃς ὄρνις ἐγένετ᾽ ἐκ τῶν ὀρνέων:
κἀπέδοτο τὸν μὲν Θαρρελείδου τουτονὶ
κολοιὸν ὀβολοῦ, τηνδεδὶ τριωβόλου.
τὼ δ᾽ οὐκ ἄρ᾽ ἦστην οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν δάκνειν.
καὶ νῦν τί κέχηνας; ἔσθ᾽ ὅποι κατὰ τῶν πετρῶν
ἡμᾶς ἔτ᾽ ἔξεις. οὐ γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἐνταῦθά τις
ὁδός.

Πισθέταιρος
οὐδὲ μὰ Δί᾽ ἐνταῦθά γ᾽ ἀτραπὸς οὐδαμοῦ.

Ἐυελπίδης

οὐδ᾽ ἡ κορώνη τῆς ὁδοῦ τι λέγει πέρι;

Πισθέταιρος

οὐ ταὐτὰ κρώζει μὰ Δία νῦν τε καὶ τότε.

Ἐυελπίδης

τί δὴ λέγει περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ;

Πισθέταιρος
τί δ᾽ ἄλλο γ᾽ ἢ
βρύκουσ᾽ ἀπέδεσθαί φησί μου τοὺς δακτύλους; **Ἐυελπίδης**

οὐ δεινὸν οὖν δῆτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς δεομένους
ἐς κόρακας ἐλθεῖν καὶ παρεσκευασμένους
ἔπειτα μὴ ‘ξευρεῖν δύνασθαι τὴν ὁδόν;

ἡμεῖς γάρ, ὦνδρες οἱ παρόντες ἐν λόγῳ,
νόσον νοσοῦμεν τὴν ἐναντίαν Σάκᾳ:
ὁ μὲν γὰρ ὢν οὐκ ἀστὸς ἐσβιάζεται,
ἡμεῖς δὲ φυλῇ καὶ γένει τιμώμενοι,
ἀστοὶ μετ᾽ ἀστῶν, οὐ σοβοῦντος οὐδενὸς
ἀνεπτόμεσθ᾽ ἐκ τῆς πατρίδος ἀμφοῖν ποδοῖν,
αὐτὴν μὲν οὐ μισοῦντ᾽ ἐκείνην τὴν πόλιν
τὸ μὴ οὐ μεγάλην εἶναι φύσει κεὐδαίμονα
καὶ πᾶσι κοινὴν ἐναποτεῖσαι χρήματα.
οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὖν τέττιγες ἕνα μῆν᾽ ἢ δύο
ἐπὶ τῶν κραδῶν ᾄδουσ᾽, Ἀθηναῖοι δ᾽ ἀεὶ
ἐπὶ τῶν δικῶν ᾄδουσι πάντα τὸν βίον.
διὰ ταῦτα τόνδε τὸν βάδον βαδίζομεν,
κανοῦν δ᾽ ἔχοντε καὶ χύτραν καὶ μυρρίνας
πλανώμεθα ζητοῦντε τόπον ἀπράγμονα,
ὅποι καθιδρυθέντε διαγενοίμεθ᾽ ἄν.
ὁ δὲ στόλος νῷν ἐστι παρὰ τὸν Τηρέα
τὸν ἔποπα, παρ᾽ ἐκείνου πυθέσθαι δεομένω,
εἴ που τοιαύτην εἶδε πόλιν ᾗ ‘πέπτετο.

Πισθέταιρος

οὗτος.

Ἐυελπίδης
τί ἔστιν;

Πισθέταιρος
ἡ κορώνη μοι πάλαι
ἄνω τι φράζει.

Ἐυελπίδης
χὠ κολοιὸς οὑτοσὶ
ἄνω κέχηνεν ὡσπερεὶ δεικνύς τί μοι,
κοὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως οὐκ ἔστιν ἐνταῦθ᾽ ὄρνεα.
εἰσόμεθα δ᾽ αὐτίκ᾽, ἢν ποιήσωμεν ψόφον.

Πισθέταιρος

ἀλλ᾽ οἶσθ᾽ ὃ δρᾶσον; τῷ σκέλει θένε τὴν πέτραν.

Ἐυελπίδης

σὺ δὲ τῇ κεφαλῇ γ᾽, ἵν᾽ ᾖ διπλάσιος ὁ ψόφος.

Πισθέταιρος

σὺ δ᾽ οὖν λίθῳ κόψον λαβών.

Ἐυελπίδης
πάνυ γ᾽, εἰ δοκεῖ.
παῖ παῖ.

Πισθέταιρος
τί λέγεις οὗτος; τὸν ἔποπα παῖ καλεῖς;
οὐκ ἀντὶ τοῦ παιδός σ᾽ ἐχρῆν ἐποποῖ καλεῖν; **Ἐυελπίδης**

ἐποποῖ. ποιήσεις ἔτι με κόπτειν αὖθις αὖ.
ἐποποῖ.

Θεράπων Ἔποπος
τίνες οὗτοι; τίς ὁ βοῶν τὸν δεσπότην; **Ἐυελπίδης**

Ἄπολλον ἀποτρόπαιε τοῦ χασμήματος.

Θεράπων Ἔποπος

οἴμοι τάλας ὀρνιθοθήρα τουτωί.

Ἐυελπίδης

οὕτως τι δεινὸν οὐδὲ κάλλιον λέγειν.

Θεράπων Ἔποπος

ἀπολεῖσθον.

Ἐυελπίδης
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀνθρώπω.

Θεράπων Ἔποπος
τί δαί;

Ἐυελπίδης

Ὑποδεδιὼς ἔγωγε Διβυκὸν ὄρνεον.

Θεράπων Ἔποπος

οὐδὲν λέγεις.

Ἐυελπίδης
καὶ μὴν ἐροῦ τὰ πρὸς ποδῶν.

Θεράπων Ἔποπος

ὁδὶ δὲ δὴ τίς ἐστιν ὄρνις; οὐκ ἐρεῖς;

Πισθέταιρος

Ἐπικεχοδὼς ἔγωγε Φασιανικός.

Ἐυελπίδης

ἀτὰρ σὺ τί θηρίον ποτ᾽ εἶ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν;

Θεράπων Ἔποπος

ὄρνις ἔγωγε δοῦλος.

Ἐυελπίδης
ἠττήθης τινὸς
ἀλεκτρυόνος; **Θεράπων Ἔποπος**
οὐκ ἀλλ᾽ ὅτε περ ὁ δεσπότης
ἔποψ ἐγένετο, τότε γενέσθαι μ᾽ ηὔξατο
ὄρνιν, ἵν᾽ ἀκόλουθον διάκονόν τ᾽ ἔχῃ.

Ἐυελπίδης

δεῖται γὰρ ὄρνις καὶ διακόνου τινός;

Θεράπων Ἔποπος

οὗτός γ᾽, ἄτ᾽ οἶμαι πρότερον ἄνθρωπός ποτ᾽ ὤν,
τοτὲ μὲν ἐρᾷ φαγεῖν ἀφύας Φαληρικάς:
τρέχω ‘π᾽ ἀφύας λαβὼν ἐγὼ τὸ τρύβλιον.
ἔτνους δ᾽ ἐπιθυμεῖ, δεῖ τορύνης καὶ χύτρας:
τρέχω ‘πὶ τορύνην.

Ἐυελπίδης
τροχίλος ὄρνις οὐτοσί.
οἶσθ᾽ οὖν ὃ δρᾶσον ὦ τροχίλε; τὸν δεσπότην
ἡμῖν κάλεσον.

Θεράπων Ἔποπος
ἀλλ᾽ ἀρτίως νὴ τὸν Δία
εὕδει καταφαγὼν μύρτα καὶ σέρφους τινάς.

Ἐυελπίδης

ὅμως ἐπέγειρον αὐτόν.

Θεράπων Ἔποπος
οἶδα μὲν σαφῶς
ὅτι ἀχθέσεται, σφῷν δ᾽ αὐτὸν οὕνεκ᾽ ἐπεγερῶ.

Πισθέταιρος

κακῶς σύ γ᾽ ἀπόλοι᾽, ὥς μ᾽ ἀπέκτεινας δέει.

Ἐυελπίδης

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων χὠ κολοιός μοἴχεται
ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους.

Πισθέταιρος
ὦ δειλότατον σὺ θηρίον,
δείσας ἀφῆκας τὸν κολοιόν; **Ἐυελπίδης**
εἰπέ μοι,
σὺ δὲ τὴν κορώνην οὐκ ἀφῆκας καταπεσών; **Πισθέταιρος**

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐκ ἔγωγε.

Ἠυελπίδης
ποῦ γάρ ἐστ᾽;

Πισθέταιρος
ἀπέπτετο.

Ἠυελπίδης

οὐκ ἆρ᾽ ἀφῆκας; ὦγάθ᾽ ὡς ἀνδρεῖος εἶ.

Ἔποψ

ἄνοιγε τὴν ὕλην, ἵν᾽ ἐξέλθω ποτέ.

Ἠυελπίδης

ὦ Ἡράκλεις τουτὶ τί ποτ᾽ ἐστὶ τὸ θηρίον;
τίς ἡ πτέρωσις; τίς ὁ τρόπος τῆς τριλοφίας;

Ἔποψ

τίνες εἰσί μ᾽ οἱ ζητοῦντες;

Ἠυελπίδης
οἱ δώδεκα θεοὶ
εἴξασιν ἐπιτρῖψαί σε.

Ἔποψ
μῶν με σκώπτετον
ὁρῶντε τὴν πτέρωσιν; ἦν γὰρ ὦ ξένοι
ἄνθρωπος.

Ἠυελπίδης
οὐ σοῦ καταγελῶμεν.

Ἔποψ
ἀλλὰ τοῦ;

Ἐυελπίδης

τὸ ῥάμφος ἡμῖν σου γέλοιον φαίνεται.

Ἔποψ

τοιαῦτα μέντοι Σοφοκλέης λυμαίνεται
ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαισιν ἐμὲ τὸν Τηρέα.

Ἐυελπίδης

Τηρεὺς γὰρ εἶ σύ; πότερον ὄρνις ἢ ταῶς;

Ἔποψ

ὄρνις ἔγωγε.

Ἐυελπίδης
κᾆτά σοι ποῦ τὰ πτερά;

Ἔποψ

ἐξερρύηκε.

Ἐυελπίδης
πότερον ὑπὸ νόσου τινός;

Ἔποψ

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τὸν χειμῶνα πάντα τῶρνεα
πτεροῤῥυεῖ τε καὖθις ἕτερα φύομεν.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴπατόν μοι σφὼ τίν᾽ ἐστόν; **Ἐυελπίδης**
νώ; βροτώ.

Ἔποψ

ποδαπὼ τὸ γένος;

Ἐυελπίδης
ὅθεν αἱ τριήρεις αἱ καλαί.

Ἔποψ

μῶν ἡλιαστά;

Ἐυελπίδης
μἀλλὰ θατέρου τρόπου,
ἀπηλιαστά.

Ἔποψ
σπείρεται γὰρ τοῦτ᾽ ἐκεῖ
τὸ σπέρμ᾽; **Ἐυελπίδης**
ὀλίγον ζητῶν ἂν ἐξ ἀγροῦ λάβοις.

Ἔποψ

πράγους δὲ δὴ τοῦ δεομένω δεῦρ᾽ ἦλθετον;

Ἐυελπίδης

σοὶ ξυγγενέσθαι βουλομένω.

Ἔποψ
τίνος πέρι;

Ἐυελπίδης

ὅτι πρῶτα μὲν ἦσθ᾽ ἄνθρωπος ὥσπερ νὼ ποτέ,
κἀργύριον ὠφείλησας ὥσπερ νὼ ποτέ,
κοὐκ ἀποδιδοὺς ἔχαιρες ὥσπερ νὼ ποτέ:
εἶτ᾽ αὖθις ὀρνίθων μεταλλάξας φύσιν
καὶ γῆν ἐπέπτου καὶ θάλατταν ἐν κύκλῳ,
καὶ πάνθ᾽ ὅσαπερ ἄνθρωπος ὅσα τ᾽ ὄρνις φρονεῖς:
ταῦτ οὖν ἱκέται νὼ πρὸς σὲ δεῦρ᾽ ἀφίγμεθα,
εἴ τινα πόλιν φράσειας ἡμῖν εὔερον
ὥσπερ σισύραν ἐγκατακλινῆναι μαλθακήν.

Ἔποψ

ἔμειτα μείζω τῶν Κραναῶν ζητεῖς πόλιν;

Ἐυελπίδης

μείζω μὲν οὐδέν, προσφορωτέραν δὲ νῷν.

Ἔποψ

ἀριστοκρατεῖσθαι δῆλος εἶ ζητῶν.

Ἐυελπίδης
ἐγώ;
ἥκιστα: καὶ γὰρ τὸν Σκελίου βδελύττομαι.

Ἔποψ

ποίαν τιν᾽ οὖν ἥδιστ᾽ ἂν οἰκοῖτ᾽ ἂν πόλιν;

Ἐυελπίδης

ὅπου τὰ μέγιστα πράγματ᾽ εἴη τοιάδε:
ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν μου πρῴ τις ἐλθὼν τῶν φίλων
λέγοι ταδί: ‘πρὸς τοῦ Διὸς τοὐλυμπίου
ὅπως παρέσει μοι καὶ σὺ καὶ τὰ παιδία
λουσάμενα πρῴ: μέλλω γὰρ ἑστιᾶν γάμους:
καὶ μηδαμῶς ἄλλως ποιήσῃς: εἰ δὲ μή,
μή μοι τότε γ᾽ ἔλθῃς, ὅταν ἐγὼ πράττω κακῶς.’

Ἔποψ

νὴ Δία ταλαιπώρων γε πραγμάτων ἐρᾷς.
τί δαὶ σύ;

Πισθέταιρος
τοιούτων ἐρῶ κἀγώ.

Ἔποψ
τίνων;

Πισθέταιρος

ὅπου ξυναντῶν μοι ταδί τις μέμψεται

ὥσπερ ἀδικηθεὶς παιδὸς ὡραίου πατήρ:
‘καλῶς γέ μου τὸν υἱὸν ὦ Στιλβωνίδη
εὑρὼν ἀπιόντ᾽ ἀπὸ γυμνασίου λελουμένον
οὐκ ἔκυσας, οὐ προσεῖπας, οὐ προσηγάγου,
οὐκ ὠρχιπέδισας, ὢν ἐμοὶ πατρικὸς φίλος.’

Ἔποψ

ὦ δειλακρίων σὺ τῶν κακῶν οἵων ἐρᾷς.
ἀτὰρ ἔστι γ᾽ ὁποίαν λέγετον εὐδαίμων πόλις
παρὰ τὴν ἐρυθρὰν θάλατταν.

Ἠυελπίδης
οἴμοι μηδαμῶς
ἡμῖν παρὰ τὴν θάλατταν, ἵν᾽ ἀνακύψεται
κλητῆρ᾽ ἄγουσ᾽ ἕωθεν ἡ Σαλαμινία.
Ἑλληνικὴν δὲ πόλιν ἔχεις ἡμῖν φράσαι; **Ἔποψ**

τί οὐ τὸν Ἠλεῖον Λέπρεον οἰκίζετον
ἐλθόνθ᾽;

Ἠυελπίδης
ὁτιὴ νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς ὅσ᾽ οὐκ ἰδὼν
βδελύττομαι τὸν Λέπρεον ἀπὸ Μελανθίου.

Ἔποψ

ἀλλ᾽ εἰσὶν ἕτεροι τῆς Λοκρίδος Ὀπούντιοι,
ἵνα χρὴ κατοικεῖν.

Ἠυελπίδης
ἀλλ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ Ὀπούντιος
οὐκ ἂν γενοίμην ἐπὶ ταλάντῳ χρυσίου.
οὗτος δὲ δὴ τίς ἔσθ᾽ ὁ μετ᾽ ὀρνίθων βίος;
σὺ γὰρ οἶσθ᾽ ἀκριβῶς.

Ἔποψ
οὐκ ἄχαρις ἐς τὴν τριβήν:
οὖ πρῶτα μὲν δεῖ ζῆν ἄνευ βαλλαντίου.

Ἐυελπίδης

πολλήν γ᾽ ἀφεῖλες τοῦ βίου κιβδηλίαν.

Ἔποψ

νεμόμεσθα δ᾽ ἐν κήποις τὰ λευκὰ σήσαμα
καὶ μύρτα καὶ μήκωνα καὶ σισύμβρια.

Ἐυελπίδης

ὑμεῖς μὲν ἆρα ζῆτε νυμφίων βίον.

Πισθέταιρος

φεῦ φεῦ:
ἦ μέγ᾽ ἐνορῶ βούλευμ᾽ ἐν ὀρνίθων γένει,
καὶ δύναμιν ἣ γένοιτ᾽ ἄν, εἰ πίθοισθέ μοι.

Ἔποψ

τί σοι πιθώμεσθ᾽;

Πισθέταιρος
ὅ τι πίθησθε; πρῶτα μὲν
μὴ περιπέτεσθε πανταχῇ κεχηνότες:
ὡς τοῦτ᾽ ἄτιμον τοὔργον ἐστίν. αὐτίκα
ἐκεῖ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν τοὺς πετομένους ἦν ἔρῃ,
‘τίς ὄρνις οὗτος;’ ὁ Τελέας ἐρεῖ ταδί:
‘ἄνθρωπος ὄρνις ἀστάθμητος πετόμενος,
ἀτέκμαρτος, οὐδὲν οὐδέποτ᾽ ἐν ταὐτῷ μένων.’

Ἔποψ

νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον εὖ γε μωμᾷ ταυταγί.
τί ἂν οὖν ποιοῖμεν;

Πισθέταιρος
οἰκίσατε μίαν πόλιν.

Ἔποψ

ποίαν δ᾽ ἂν οἰκίσαιμεν ὄρνιθες πόλιν;

Πισθέταιρος

ἄληθες; ὦ σκαιότατον εἰρηκὼς ἔπος,
βλέψον κάτω.

Ἔποψ
καὶ δὴ βλέπω.

Πισθέταιρος
βλέπε νῦν ἄνω.

Ἔποψ

βλέπω.

Πισθέταιρος
περίαγε τὸν τράχηλον.

Ἔποψ
νὴ Δία
ἀπολαύσομαί τί γ᾽, εἰ διαστραφήσομαι.

Πισθέταιρος

εἶδές τι;

Ἔποψ
τὰς νεφέλας γε καὶ τὸν οὐρανόν.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐχ οὗτος οὖν δήπου ‘στὶν ὀρνίθων πόλος;

Ἔποψ

πόλος; τίνα τρόπον;

Πισθέταιρος
ὥσπερ ἂν εἴποι τις τόπος.
ὅτι δὲ πολεῖται τοῦτο καὶ διέρχεται
ἅπαντα διὰ τούτου, καλεῖται νῦν πόλος.
ἢν δ᾽ οἰκίσητε τοῦτο καὶ φάρξηθ᾽ ἅπαξ,
ἐκ τοῦ πόλου τούτου κεκλήσεται πόλις.
ὥστ᾽ ἄρξετ᾽ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ὥσπερ παρνόπων,
τοὺς δ᾽ αὖ θεοὺς ἀπολεῖτε λιμῷ Μηλίῳ.

Ἔποψ

πῶς;

Πισθέταιρος
ἐν μέσῳ δήπουθεν ἀήρ ἐστι γῆς.
εἶθ᾽ ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς, ἢν ἰέναι βουλώμεθα
Πυθώδε, Βοιωτοὺς δίοδον αἰτούμεθα,
οὕτως, ὅταν θύσωσιν ἄνθρωποι θεοῖς,
ἢν μὴ φόρον φέρωσιν οἱ ὑμῖν οἱ θεοί,
διὰ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἀλλοτρίας καὶ τοῦ χάους
τῶν μηρίων τὴν κνῖσαν οὐ διαφρήσετε.

Ἔποψ

ἰοὺ ἰού:
μὰ γῆν μὰ παγίδας μὰ νεφέλας μὰ δίκτυα,
μὴ ‘γὼ νόημα κομψότερον ἤκουσά πω:
ὥστ᾽ ἂν κατοικίζοιμι μετὰ σοῦ τὴν πόλιν,
εἰ ξυνδοκοίη τοῖσιν ἄλλοις ὀρνέοις.

Πισθέταιρος

τίς ἂν οὖν τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ αὐτοῖς διηγήσαιτο;

Ἔποψ
σύ.
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτοὺς βαρβάρους ὄντας πρὸ τοῦ
ἐδίδαξα τὴν φωνήν, ξυνὼν πολὺν χρόνον.

Πισθέταιρος

πῶς δῆτ᾽ ἂν αὐτοὺς ξυγκαλέσειας;

Ἔποψ
ῥᾳδίως.
δευρὶ γὰρ ἐσβὰς αὐτίκα μάλ᾽ ἐς τὴν λόχμην,
ἔπειτ᾽ ἀνεγείρας τὴν ἐμὴν ἀηδόνα,
καλοῦμεν αὐτούς: οἱ δὲ νῷν τοῦ φθέγματος
ἐάνπερ ἐπακούσωσι θεύσονται δρόμῳ.

Πισθέταιρος

ὦ φίλτατ᾽ ὀρνίθων σὺ μή νυν ἔσταθι:
ἀλλ᾽ ἀντιβολῶ σ᾽ ἄγ᾽ ὡς τάχιστ᾽ ἐς τὴν λόχμην
ἔσβαινε κἀνέγειρε τὴν ἀηδόνα.

Ἔποψ

ἄγε σύννομέ μοι παῦσαι μὲν ὕπνου,
λῦσον δὲ νόμους ἱερῶν ὕμνων,
οὓς διὰ θείου στόματος θρηνεῖς
τὸν ἐμὸν καὶ σὸν πολύδακρυν Ἴτυν:
ἐλελιζομένης δ᾽ ἱεροῖς μέλεσιν
γένυος ξουθῆς
καθαρὰ χωρεῖ διὰ φυλλοκόμου
μίλακος ἠχὼ πρὸς Διὸς ἕδρας,
ἵν᾽ ὁ χρυσοκόμας Φοῖβος ἀκούων
τοῖς σοῖς ἐλέγοις ἀντιψάλλων
ἐλεφαντόδετον φόρμιγγα θεῶν
ἵστησι χορούς: διὰ δ᾽ ἀθανάτων
στομάτων χωρεῖ ξύμφωνος ὁμοῦ
θεία μακάρων ὁλολυγή.
(αὐλεῖ) Πισθέταιρος

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ τοῦ φθέγματος τοὐρνιθίου:
οἷον κατεμελίτωσε τὴν λόχμην ὅλην.

Ἐυελπίδης

οὗτος.

Πισθέταιρος
τί ἔστιν; οὐ σιωπήσει;

Ἐυελπίδης
τί δαί;

Πισθέταιρος

οὔποψ μελῳδεῖν αὖ παρασκευάζεται.

Ἔποψ

ἐποποῖ ποποποποποποποῖ,
ἰὼ ἰὼ ἰτὼ ἰτὼ ἰτὼ ἰτὼ,
ἴτω τις ὧδε τῶν ἐμῶν ὁμοπτέρων:
ὅσοι τ᾽ εὐσπόρους ἀγροίκων γύας
νέμεσθε, φῦλα μυρία κριθοτράγων
σπερμολόγων τε γένη
ταχὺ πετόμενα, μαλθακὴν ἱέντα γῆρυν:
ὅσα τ᾽ ἐν ἄλοκι θαμὰ
βῶλον ἀμφιτιττυβίζεθ᾽ ὧδε λεπτὸν
ἡδομένᾳ φωνᾷ:
τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιό.
ὅσα θ᾽ ὑμῶν κατὰ κήπους ἐπὶ κισσοῦ
κλάδεσι νομὸν ἔχει,
τά τε κατ᾽ ὄρεα τά τε κοτινοτράγα τά τε κομαροφάγα,
ἀνύσατε πετόμενα πρὸς ἐμὰν αὐδάν:
τριοτὸ τριοτὸ τοτοβρίξ:
οἵ θ᾽ ἑλείας παρ᾽ αὐλῶνας ὀξυστόμους
ἐμπίδας κάπτεθ᾽, ὅσα τ᾽ εὐδρόσους γῆς τόπους
ἔχετε λειμῶνά τ᾽ ἐρόεντα Μαραθῶνος, ὄρνις
πτερυγοποίκιλός τ᾽ ἀτταγᾶς ἀτταγᾶς.
ὧν τ᾽ ἐπὶ πόντιον οἶδμα θαλάσσης
φῦλα μετ᾽ ἀλκυόνεσσι ποτῆται,
δεῦρ᾽ ἴτε πευσόμενοι τὰ νεώτερα,
πάντα γὰρ ἐνθάδε φῦλ᾽ ἀθροΐζομεν
οἰωνῶν ταναοδείρων.
ἥκει γὰρ τις δριμὺς πρέσβυς
καινὸς γνώμην

καινῶν τ᾽ ἔργων ἐγχειρητής.
ἀλλ᾽ ἴτ᾽ ἐς λόγους ἅπαντα,
δεῦρο δεῦρο δεῦρο δεῦρο.

Χορὸς

τοροτοροτοροτοροτίξ.
κικκαβαῦ κικκαβαῦ.
τοροτοροτοροτορολιλιλίξ.

Πισθέταιρος

ὁρᾷς τιν᾽ ὄρνιν;

Ἠυελπίδης
μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω ‘γὼ μὲν οὔ:
καίτοι κέχηνά γ᾽ ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν βλέπων.

Πισθέταιρος

ἄλλως ἄρ᾽ οὔποψ, ὡς ἔοικ᾽, ἐς τὴν λόχμην
ἐσβὰς ἐπῷζε χαραδριὸν μιμούμενος.

Ὄρνις Τις

τοροτὶξ τοροτίξ.

Πισθέταιρος

ὦγάθ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ εἶς οὑτοσὶ καὶ δή τις ὄρνις ἔρχεται.

Ἠυελπίδης

νὴ Δί᾽ ὄρνις δῆτα. τίς ποτ᾽ ἐστίν; οὐ δήπου ταῶς;

Πισθέταιρος

οὗτος αὐτὸς νῷν φράσει: τίς ἐστιν ὄρνις οὑτοσί;

Ἔποψ

οὗτος οὐ τῶν ἠθάδων τῶνδ᾽ ὧν ὁρᾶθ᾽ ὑμεῖς ἀεί,
ἀλλὰ λιμναῖος.

Ἐυελπίδης
βαβαὶ καλός γε καὶ φοινικιοῦς.

Ἔποψ

εἰκότως γε: καὶ γὰρ ὄνομ᾽ αὐτῷ ‘στὶ φοινικόπτερος.

Ἐυελπίδης

οὗτος ὦ σέ τοι.

Πισθέταιρος
τί βωστρεῖς;

Ἐυελπίδης
ἕτερος ὄρνις οὐτοσί.

Πισθέταιρος

νὴ Δί᾽ ἕτερος δῆτα χοὗτος ἕξεδρον χρόαν ἔχων.
τίς ποτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὁ μουσόμαντις ἄτοπος ὄρνις ὀρειβάτης; **Ἔποψ**

ὄνομα τούτῳ Μῆδός ἐστο.

Πισθέταιρος
Μῆδος; ὦναξ Ἡράκλεις:
εἶτα πῶς ἄνευ καμήλου Μῆδος ὢν εἰσέπτετο; **Ἐυελπίδης**

ἕτερος αὖ λόφον κατειληφώς τις ὄρνις οὐτοσί.

Πισθέταιρος

τί τὸ τέρας τουτί ποτ᾽ ἐστίν; οὐ σὺ μόνος ἄρ᾽ ἦσθ᾽ ἔποψ,
ἀλλὰ χοὗτος ἕτερος; **Ἔποψ**
οὐτοσὶ μέν ἐστι Φιλοκλέους
ἐξ ἔποπος, ἐγὼ δὲ τούτου πάππος, ὥσπερ εἰ λέγοις
Ἱππόνικος Καλλίου κἀξ Ἱππονίκου Καλλίας.

Πισθέταιρος

Καλλίας ἄρ᾽ οὗτος οὔρνις ἐστίν: ὡς πτεροῤῥυεῖ.

Ἐυελπίδης

ἅτε γὰρ ὢν γενναῖος ὑπό τε συκοφαντῶν τίλλεται,
αἵ τε θήλειαι προσεκτίλλουσιν αὐτοῦ τὰ πτερά.

Πισθέταιρος

ὦ Πόσειδον ἕτερος αὖ τις βαπτὸς ὄρνις οὐτοσί.
τίς ὀνομάξεταί ποθ᾽ οὗτος;

Ἔποψ
οὐτοσὶ κατωφαγᾶς.

Πισθέταιρος

ἔστι γὰρ κατωφαγᾶς τις ἄλλος ἢ Κλεώνυμος;

Ἐυελπίδης

πῶς ἂν οὖν Κλεώνυμός γ᾽ ὢν οὐκ ἀπέβαλε τὸν λόφον;

Πισθέταιρος

ἀλλὰ μέντοι τίς ποθ᾽ ἡ λόφωσις ἡ τῶν ὀρνέων;
ἦ ‘πὶ τὸν δίαυλον ἦλθον;

Ἔποψ
ὥσπερ οἱ Κᾶρες μὲν οὖν
ἐπὶ λόφων οἰκοῦσιν ὦγάθ᾽ ἀσφαλείας οὕνεκα.

Πισθέταιρος

ὦ Πόσειδον οὐχ ὁρᾷς ὅσον συνείλεκται κακὸν
ὀρνέων;

Ἐυελπίδης

ὦναξ Ἄπολλον τοῦ νέφους. ἰοὺ ἰού,
οὐδ᾽ ἰδεῖν ἔτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν πετομένων τὴν εἴσοδον.

Ἔποψ

οὐτοσὶ πέρδιξ, ἐκεινοσί γε νὴ Δί᾽ ἀτταγᾶς,
οὐτοσὶ δὲ πηνέλοψ, ἐκεινηὶ δέ γ᾽ ἀλκυών.

Πισθέταιρος

τίς γάρ ἐσθ᾽ οὗπισθεν αὐτῆς;

Ἔποψ
ὅστις ἐστί; κειρύλος.

Πισθέταιρος

κειρύλος γάρ ἐστιν ὄρνις;

Ἔποψ
οὐ γάρ ἐστι Σποργίλος;
χαὐτηί γε γλαῦξ.

Ἠυελπίδης
τί φῄς; τίς γλαῦκ᾽ Ἀθήναζ᾽ ἤγαγεν;

Ἔποψ

κίττα τρυγὼν κορυδὸς ἐλεᾶς ὑποθυμὶς περιστερὰ
νέρτος ἱέραξ φάττα κόκκυξ ἐρυθρόπους κεβλήπυρις
πορφυρὶς κερχνὴς κολυμβὶς ἀμπελὶς φήην δρύοψ.

Πισθέταιρος

ἰοὺ ἰοὺ τῶν ὀρνέων, ἰοὺ ἰοὺ τῶν κοψίχων:
οἷα πιππίζουσι καὶ τρέχουσι διακεκραγότες.
ἆρ᾽ ἀπειλοῦσίν γε νῷν; οἴμοι, κεχήνασίν γέ τοι
καὶ βλέπουσιν ἐς σὲ κἀμέ.

Ἠυελπίδης

τοῦτο μὲν κἀμοὶ δοκεῖ.

Χορός

ποποποποποποποποποποῖ ποῦ μ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ὃς
ἐκάλεσε; τίνα τόπον ἄρα ποτὲ νέμεται; **Ἔποψ**

οὐτοσὶ πάλαι πάρειμι κοὐκ ἀποστατῶ φίλων.

Χορός

τί τί τί τί τί τί τί τί: τίνα λόγον ἄρα ποτὲ
πρὸς ἐμὲ φίλον ἔχων;

Ἔποψ

κοινὸν ἀσφαλῆ δίκαιον ἡδὺν ὠφελήσιμον.
ἄνδρε γὰρ λεπτὼ λογιστὰ δεῦρ᾽ ἀφῖχθον ὡς ἐμέ.

Χορός

ποῦ; πᾷ; πῶς φῄς;

Ἔποψ

φήμ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἀνθρώπων ἀφῖχθαι δεῦρο πρεσβύτα δύο:
ἥκετον δ᾽ ἔχοντε πρέμνον πράγματος πελωρίου.

Χορός

ὦ μέγιστον ἐξαμαρτὼν ἐξ ὅτου ‘τράφην ἐγώ,
πῶς λέγεις;

Ἔποψ
μήπω φοβηθῇς τὸν λόγον.

Χορός
τί μ᾽ ἠργάσω;

Ἔποψ

ἄνδρ᾽ ἐδεξάμην ἐραστὰ τῆσδε τῆς ξυνουσίας.

Χορός

καὶ δέδρακας τοῦτο τοὔργον;

Ἔποψ
καὶ δεδρακώς γ᾽ ἥδομαι.

Χορός

κἀστὸν ἤδη που παρ᾽ ἡμῖν;

Ἔποψ
εἰ παρ᾽ ὑμῖν εἶμ᾽ ἐγώ.

Χορός

ἔα ἔα,
προδεδόμεθ᾽ ἀνόσιά τ᾽ ἐπάθομεν:
ὃς γὰρ φίλος ἦν ὁμότροφά θ᾽ ἡμῖν
ἐνέμετο πεδία παρ᾽ ἡμῖν,
παρέβη μὲν θεσμοὺς ἀρχαίους,
παρέβη δ᾽ ὅρκους ὀρνίθων:
ἐς δὲ δόλον ἐκάλεσε, παρέβαλέ τ᾽ ἐμὲ παρὰ
γένος ἀνόσιον, ὅπερ ἐξότ᾽ ἐγένετ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐμοὶ
πολέμιον ἐτράφη. **Χορός**

ἀλλὰ πρὸς τοῦτον μὲν ἡμῖν ἐστιν ὕστερος λόγος:
τὼ δὲ πρεσβύτα δοκεῖ μοι τώδε δοῦναι τὴν δίκην
διαφορηθῆναί θ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ἡμῶν.

Πισθέταιρος
ὡς ἀπωλόμεσθ᾽ ἄρα.

Ἠυελπίδης

αἴτιος μέντοι σὺ νῷν εἶ τῶν κακῶν τούτων μόνος.
ἐπὶ τί γάρ μ᾽ ἐκεῖθεν ἦγες; **Πισθέταιρος**
ἵν᾽ ἀκολουθοίης ἐμοί.

Ἐυελπίδης

ἵνα μὲν οὖν κλάοιμι μεγάλα.

Πισθέταιρος
τοῦτο μὲν ληρεῖς ἔχων
κάρτα: πῶς κλαύσει γάρ, ἢν ἄπαξ γε τὠφθαλμὼ ‘κκοπῇς; **Χορός**

ἰὼ ἰώ,
ἔπαγ᾽ ἔπιθ᾽ ἐπίφερε πολέμιον
ὁρμὰν φονίαν, πτέρυγά τε παντᾷ
ἐπίβαλε περί τε κύκλωσαι:
ὡς δεῖ τώδ᾽ οἰμώζειν ἄμφω
καὶ δοῦναι ῥύγχει φορβάν.
οὔτε γὰρ ὄρος σκιερὸν οὔτε νέφος αἰθέριον
οὔτε πολιὸν πέλαγος ἔστιν ὅ τι δέξεται
τώδ᾽ ἀποφυγόντε με. **Χορός**

ἀλλὰ μὴ μέλλωμεν ἤδη τώδε τίλλειν καὶ δάκνειν.
ποῦ ‘σθ᾽ ὁ ταξίαρχος; ἐπαγέτω τὸ δεξιὸν κέρας. **Ἐυελπίδης**

τοῦτ᾽ ἐκεῖνο: ποῖφύγω δύστηνος;

Πισθέταιρος
οὗτος οὐ μενεῖς;

Ἐυελπίδης

ἵν᾽ ὑπὸ τούτων διαφορηθῶ;

Πισθέταιρος
πῶς γὰρ ἂν τούτους δοκεῖς
ἐκφυγεῖν;

Ἐυελπίδης
οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅπως ἄν.

Πισθέταιρος
ἀλλ᾽ ἐγώ τοί σοι λέγω,
ὅτι μένοντε δεῖ μάχεσθαι λαμβάνειν τε τῶν χυτρῶν.

Ἐυελπίδης

τί δὲ χύτρα νώ γ᾽ ὠφελήσει;

Πισθέταιρος
γλαῦξ μὲν οὐ πρόσεισι νῷν.

Ἐυελπίδης

τοῖς δὲ γαμψώνυξι τοισδί;

Πισθέταιρος
τὸν ὀβελίσκον ἁρπάσας
εἶτα κατάπηξον πρὸ σαυτοῦ.

Ἐυελπίδης
τοῖσι δ᾽ ὀφθαλμοῖσι τί;

Πισθέταιρος

ὀξύβαφον ἐντευθενὶ προσδοῦ λαβὼν ἢ τρύβλιον.

Ἐυελπίδης

ὦ σοφώτατ᾽, εὖ γ᾽ ἀνηῦρες αὐτὸ καὶ στρατηγικῶς:
ὑπερακοντίζεις σύ γ᾽ ἤδη Νικίαν ταῖς μηχαναῖς.

Χορός

ἐλελελεῦ χώρει κάθες τὸ ῥύγχος: οὐ μέλλειν ἐχρῆν.
ἔλκε τίλλε παῖε δεῖρε, κόπτε πρώτην τὴν χύτραν.

Ἔποψ

εἰπέ μοι τί μέλλετ᾽ ὦ πάντων κάκιστα θηρίων
ἀπολέσαι παθόντες οὐδὲν ἄνδρε καὶ διασπάσαι
τῆς ἐμῆς γυναικὸς ὄντε ξυγγενεῖ καὶ φυλέτα; **Χορός**

φεισόμεσθα γάρ τι τῶνδε μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς ἢ λύκων;
ἢ τίνας τεισαίμεθ᾽ ἄλλους τῶνδ᾽ ἂν ἐχθίους ἔτι; **Ἔποψ**

εἰ δὲ τὴν φύσιν μὲν ἐχθροὶ τὸν δὲ νοῦν εἰσιν φίλοι,
καὶ διδάξοντές τι δεῦρ᾽ ἥκουσιν ὑμᾶς χρήσιμον; **Χορός**

πῶς δ᾽ ἂν οἵδ᾽ ἡμᾶς τι χρήσιμον διδάξειάν ποτε
ἢ φράσειαν, ὄντες ἐχθροὶ τοῖσι πάπποις τοῖς ἐμοῖς; **Ἅποψ**

ἀλλ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἐχθρῶν δῆτα πολλὰ μανθάνουσιν οἱ σοφοί.
ἡ γὰρ εὐλάβεια σῴζει πάντα. παρὰ μὲν οὖν φίλου
οὐ μάθοις ἂν τοῦθ᾽, ὁ δ᾽ ἐχθρὸς εὐθὺς ἐξηνάγκασεν.
αὐτίχ᾽ αἱ πόλεις παρ᾽ ἀνδρῶν γ᾽ ἔμαθον ἐχθρῶν κοὐ φίλων
ἐκπονεῖν θ᾽ ὑψηλὰ τείχη ναῦς τε κεκτῆσθαι μακράς:
τὸ δὲ μάθημα τοῦτο σῴζει παῖδας οἶκον χρήματα.

Χορός

ἔστι μὲν λόγων ἀκοῦσαι πρῶτον, ὡς ἡμῖν δοκεῖ,
χρήσιμον: μάθοι γὰρ ἄν τις κἀπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν σοφόν.

Πισθέταιρος

οἵδε τῆς ὀργῆς χαλᾶν εἴξασιν. ἄναγ᾽ ἐπὶ σκέλος.

Ἅποψ

καὶ δίκαιόν γ᾽ ἐστὶ κἀμοὶ δεῖ νέμειν ὑμᾶς χάριν.

Χορός

ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ᾽ ἄλλο σοί πω πρᾶγμ᾽ ἐνηντιώμεθα.

Πισθέταιρος

μᾶλλον εἰρήνην ἄγουσι νὴ Δί᾽, ὥστε τὴν χύτραν
τώ τε τρυβλίω καθίει:
καὶ τὸ δόρυ χρή, τὸν ὀβελίσκον,
περιπατεῖν ἔχοντας ἡμᾶς
τῶν ὅπλων ἐντός, παρ᾽ αὐτὴν
τὴν χύτραν ἄκραν ὁρῶντας
ἐγγύς: ὡς οὐ φευκτέον νῷν.

Ἐυελπίδης

ἐτεὸν ἦν δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἀποθάνωμεν,
κατορυχθησόμεσθα ποῦ γῆς;

Πισθέταιρος

ὁ Κεραμεικὸς δέξεται νώ.
δημοσίᾳ γὰρ ἵνα ταφῶμεν,
φήσομεν πρὸς τοὺς στρατηγοὺς
μαχομένω τοῖς πολεμίοισιν
ἀποθανεῖν ἐν Ὀρνεαῖς.

Χορός

ἄναγ᾽ ἐς τάξιν πάλιν ἐς ταὐτόν,
καὶ τὸν θυμὸν κατάθου κύψας
παρὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ὥσπερ ὁπλίτης:
κἀναπυθώμεθα τούσδε τίνες ποτὲ
καὶ πόθεν ἔμολον
† ἐπὶ τίνα τ᾽ ἐπίνοιαν. †
ἰὼ ἔποψ σέ τοι καλῶ. **Ἔποψ**

καλεῖς δὲ τοῦ κλύειν θέλων;

Χορός

τίνες ποθ᾽ οἵδε καὶ πόθεν;

Ἔποψ

ξείνω σοφῆς ἀφ᾽ Ἑλλάδος.

Χορός

τύχη δὲ ποία κομίζει
ποτ᾽ αὐτὼ πρὸς ὄρνιθας
ἐλθεῖν; **Ἔποψ**
ἔρως
βίου διαίτης τε καὶ

σοῦ ξυνοικεῖν τέ σοι
καὶ ξυνεῖναι τὸ πᾶν.

Χορός

τί φῄς;
λέγουσι δὴ τίνας λόγους;

Ἄποψ

ἄπιστα καὶ πέρα κλύειν.

Χορός

ὁρᾷ τι κέρδος ἐνθάδ᾽ ἄξιον
μονῆς, ὅτῳ πέποιθ᾽
ἐμοὶ ξυνὼν
κρατεῖν ἂν ἢ τὸν ἐχθρὸν ἢ
φίλοισιν ὠφελεῖν ἔχειν; **Ἄποψ**

λέγει μέγαν τιν᾽ ὄλβον οὔτε
λεκτὸν οὔτε πιστόν: ὡς
σὰ γὰρ τὰ πάντα ταῦτα καὶ
τὸ τῇδε καὶ τὸ κεῖσε καὶ
τὸ δεῦρο προσβιβᾷ λέγων.

Χορός

πότερα μαινόμενος;

Ἄποψ

ἄφατον ὡς φρόνιμος.

Χορός

ἔνι σοφόν τι φρενί;

Ἄποψ

πυκνότατον κίναδος,
σόφισμα κύρμα τρῖμμα παιπάλημ᾽ ὅλον.

Χορός

λέγειν λέγειν κέλευέ μοι.
κλύων γὰρ ὧν σύ μοι λέγεις
λόγων ἀνεπτέρωμαι.

Ἔποψ

ἄγε δὴ σὺ καὶ σὺ τὴν πανοπλίαν μὲν πάλιν
ταύτην λαβόντε κρεμάσατον τύχἀγαθῇ
ἐς τὸν ἰπνὸν εἴσω πλησίον τοὐπιστάτου:
σὺ δὲ τούσδ᾽ ἐφ᾽ οἷσπερ τοῖς λόγοις συνέλεξ᾽ ἐγὼ
φράσον, δίδαξον.

Πισθέταιρος
μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω ‘γὼ μὲν οὔ,
ἢν μὴ διάθωνταί γ᾽ οἵδε διαθήκην ἐμοὶ
ἥνπερ ὁ πίθηκος τῇ γυναικὶ διέθετο,
ὁ μαχαιροποιός, μήτε δάκνειν τούτους ἐμὲ
μήτ᾽ ὀρχίπεδ᾽ ἕλκειν μήτ᾽ ὀρύττειν — **Χορός**
οὔτι που
τόν — ; οὐδαμῶς.

Πισθέταιρος
οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τὠφθαλμὼ λέγω.

Χορός

διατίθεμαι ‘γώ.

Πισθέταιρος
κατόμοσόν νυν ταῦτά μοι.

Χορός

ὄμνυμ᾽ ἐπὶ τούτοις, πᾶσι νικᾶν τοῖς κριταῖς
καὶ τοῖς θεαταῖς πᾶσιν.

Πισθέταιρος
ἔσται ταυταγί.

Χορός

εἰ δὲ παραβαίην, ἑνὶ κριτῇ νικᾶν μόνον.

Κῆρυξ

ἀκούετε λεῴ: τοὺς ὁπλίτας νυνμενὶ
ἀνελομένους θᾧπλ᾽ ἀπιέναι πάλιν οἴκαδε,
σκοπεῖν δ᾽ ὅ τι ἂν προγράφωμεν ἐν τοῖς πινακίοις.

Χορός

δολερὸν μὲν ἀεὶ κατὰ πάντα δὴ τρόπον
πέφυκεν ἄνθρωπος: σὺ δ᾽ ὅμως λέγε μοι.
τάχα γὰρ τύχοις ἂν
χρηστὸν ἐξειπὼν ὅ τι μοι παρορᾷς, ἢ
δύναμίν τινα μείζω
παραλειπομένην ὑπ᾽ ἐμῆς φρενὸς ἀξυνέτου:
σὺ δὲ τοῦθ᾽ οὑρᾷς λέγ᾽ ἐς κοινόν.
ὃ γὰρ ἂν σὺ τύχῃς μοι
ἀγαθὸν πορίσας, τοῦτο κοινὸν ἔσται. **Χορός**

ἀλλ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ὅτῳπερ πράγματι τὴν σὴν ἥκεις γνώμην ἀναπείσας,
λέγε θαρρήσας: ὡς τὰς σπονδὰς οὐ μὴ πρότεροι παραβῶμεν. **Πισθέταιρος**

καὶ μὴν ὀργῶ νὴ τὸν Δία καὶ προπεφύραται λόγος εἶς μοι,
ὃν διαμάττειν οὐ κωλύει: φέρε παῖ στέφανον: καταχεῖσθαι
κατὰ χειρὸς ὕδωρ φερέτω ταχύ τις.

Ἐυελπίδης
δειπνήσειν μέλλομεν; ἢ τί;

Πισθέταιρος

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ λέγειν ζητῶ τι πάλαι μέγα καὶ λαρινὸν ἔπος τι,
ὅ το τὴν τούτων θραύσει ψυχήν: οὕτως ὑμῶν ὑπεραλγῶ,
οἵτινες ὄντες πρότερον βασιλῆς — **Χορός**

ἡμεῖς βασιλῆς; τίνος;

Πισθέταιρος
ὑμεῖς
πάντων ὁπόσ᾽ ἔστιν, ἐμοῦ πρῶτον, τουδί, καὶ τοῦ Διὸς αὐτοῦ,
ἀρχαιότεροι πρότεροί τε Κρόνου καὶ Τιτάνων ἐγένεσθε,
καὶ γῆς.

Χορός
καὶ γῆς;

Πισθέταιρος
νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω.

Χορός

τουτὶ μὰ Δί᾽ οὐκ ἐπεπύσμην.

Πισθέταιρος

ἀμαθὴς γὰρ ἔφυς κοὐ πολυπράγμων, οὐδ᾽ Αἴσωπον πεπάτηκας,
ὃς ἔφασκε λέγων κορυδὸν πάντων πρώτην ὄρνιθα γενέσθαι,
προτέραν τῆς γῆς, κἄπειτα νόσῳ τὸν πατέρ᾽ αὐτῆς ἀποθνῄσκειν:
γῆν δ᾽ οὐκ εἶναι, τὸν δὲ προκεῖσθαι πεμπταῖον: τὴν δ᾽ ἀποροῦσαν
ὑπ᾽ ἀμηχανίας τὸν πατέρ᾽ αὐτῆς ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ κατορύξαι.

Ἐυελπίδης

ὁ πατὴρ ἄρα τῆς κορυδοῦ νυνὶ κεῖται τεθνεὼς Κεφαλῆσιν.

Πισθέταιρος

οὔκουν δῆτ᾽ εἰ πρότεροι μὲν γῆς πρότεροι δὲ θεῶν ἐγένοντο,
ὡς πρεσβυτάτων αὐτῶν ὄντων ὀρθῶς ἐσθ᾽ ἡ βασιλεία; **Ἐυελπίδης**

νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω: πάνυ τοίνυν χρὴ ῥύγχος βόσκειν σε τὸ λοιπόν:
οὐκ ἀποδώσει ταχέως ὁ Ζεὺς τὸ σκῆπτρον τῷ δρυκολάπτῃ.

Πισθέταιρος

ὡς δ᾽ οὐχὶ θεοὶ τοίνυν ἦρχον τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸ παλαιόν,
ἀλλ᾽ ὄρνιθες, κἀβασίλευον, πόλλ᾽ ἐστὶ τεκμήρια τούτων.
αὐτίκα δ᾽ ὑμῖν πρῶτ᾽ ἐπιδείξω τὸν ἀλεκτρυόν᾽, ὡς ἐτυράννει
ἦρχέ τε Περσῶν πρῶτον πάντων Δαρείου καὶ Μεγαβάζου,
ὥστε καλεῖται Περσικὸς ὄρνις ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἔτ᾽ ἐκείνης.

Ἐυελπίδης

διὰ ταῦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔχων καὶ νῦν ὥσπερ βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας διαβάσκει
ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὴν κυρβασίαν τῶν ὀρνίθων μόνος ὀρθήν.

Πισθέταιρος

οὕτω δ᾽ ἴσχυσέ τε καὶ μέγας ἦν τότε καὶ πολύς, ὥστ᾽ ἔτι καὶ νῦν
ὑπὸ τῆς ῥώμης τῆς τότ᾽ ἐκείνης, ὁπόταν μόνον ὄρθριον ᾄσῃ,
ἀναπηδῶσιν πάντες ἐπ᾽ ἔργον χαλκῆς κεραμῆς σκυλοδέψαι
σκυτῆς βαλανῆς ἀλφιταμοιβοὶ τορνευτολυρασπιδοπηγοί:
οἱ δὲ βαδίζουσ᾽ ὑποδησάμενοι νύκτωρ.

Ἐυελπίδης
ἐμὲ τοῦτό γ᾽ ἐρώτα.
χλαῖναν γὰρ ἀπώλεσ᾽ ὁ μοχθηρὸς Φρυγίων ἐρίων διὰ τοῦτον.
ἐς δεκάτην γάρ ποτε παιδαρίου κληθεὶς ὑπέπινον ἐν ἄστει,
κἄρτι καθηῦδον, καὶ πρὶν δειπνεῖν τοὺς ἄλλους οὗτος ἄρ᾽ ᾔσεν:
κἀγὼ νομίσας ὄρθρον ἐχώρουν Ἀλιμουντάδε, κἄρτι προκύπτω
ἔξω τείχους καὶ λωποδύτης παίει ῥοπάλῳ με τὸ νῶτον:
κἀγὼ πίπτω μέλλω τε βοᾶν, ὁ δ᾽ ἀπέβλισε θοἰμάτιόν μου.

Πισθέταιρος

ἰκτῖνος δ᾽ οὖν τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἦρχεν τότε κἀβασίλευεν.

Χορός

τῶν Ἑλλήνων;

Πισθέταιρος
καὶ κατέδειξέν γ᾽ οὗτος πρῶτος βασιλεύων
προκυλινδεῖσθαι τοῖς ἰκτίνοις.

Ἐυελπίδης
νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον, ἐγὼ γοῦν
ἐκυλινδούμην ἰκτῖνον ἰδών: κᾆθ᾽ ὕπτιος ὢν ἀναχάσκων
ὀβολὸν κατεβρόχθισα: κᾆτα κενὸν τὸν θύλακον οἴκαδ᾽ ἀφεῖλκον.

Πισθέταιρος

Αἰγύπτου δ᾽ αὖ καὶ Φοινίκης πάσης κόκκυξ βασιλεὺς ἦν:
χὠπόθ᾽ ὁ κόκκυξ εἴποι ‘κόκκυ,’ τότ᾽ ἂν οἱ Φοίνικες ἅπαντες
τοὺς πυροὺς ἂν καὶ τὰς κριθὰς ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις ἐθέριζον.

Ἐυελπίδης

τοῦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ ἦν τοὔπος ἀληθῶς: ‘κόκκυψωλοὶ πεδίονδε.’

Πισθέταιρος

ἦρχον δ᾽ οὕτω σφόδρα τὴν ἀρχήν, ὥστ᾽ εἴ τις καὶ βασιλεύοι
ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν τῶν Ἑλλήνων Ἀγαμέμνων ἢ Μενέλαος,
ἐπὶ τῶν σκήπτρων ἐκάθητ᾽ ὄρνις μετέχων ὅ τι δωροδοκοίη.

Ἐυελπίδης

τουτὶ τοίνυν οὐκ ᾔδη ‘γώ: καὶ δῆτά μ᾽ ἐλάμβανε θαῦμα,
ὁπότ᾽ ἐξέλθοι Πρίαμός τις ἔχων ὄρνιν ἐν τοῖσι τραγῳδοῖς,
ὁ δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ εἱστήκει τὸν Λυσικράτη τηρῶν ὅ τι δωροδοκοίη.

Πισθέταιρος

ὃ δὲ δεινότατόν γ᾽ ἐστὶν ἁπάντων, ὁ Ζεὺς γὰρ ὁ νῦν βασιλεύων
αἰετὸν ὄρνιν ἕστηκεν ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς βασιλεὺς ὤν,
ἡ δ᾽ αὖ θυγάτηρ γλαῦχ᾽, ὁ δ᾽ Ἀπόλλων ὥσπερ θεράπων ἱέρακα.

Ἐυελπίδης

νὴ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽ εὖ ταῦτα λέγεις. τίνος οὕνεκα ταῦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔχουσιν;

Πισθέταιρος

ἵν᾽ ὅταν θύων τις ἔπειτ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἐς τὴν χεῖρ᾽, ὡς νόμος ἐστίν,

τὰ σπλάγχνα διδῷ, τοῦ Διὸς αὐτοὶ πρότεροι τὰ σπλάγχνα λάβωσιν.
ὤμνυ τ᾽ οὐδεὶς τότ᾽ ἂν ἀνθρώπων θεόν, ἀλλ᾽ ὄρνιθας ἅπαντες:
Λάμπων δ᾽ ὄμνυσ᾽ ἔτι καὶ νυνὶ τὸν χῆν᾽, ὅταν ἐξαπατᾷ τι.
οὕτως ὑμᾶς πάντες πρότερον μεγάλους ἁγίους τ᾽ ἐνόμιζον, **Πισθέταιρος**

νῦν δ᾽ ἀνδράποδ᾽ ἠλιθίους Μανᾶς:
ὥσπερ δ᾽ ἤδη τοὺς μαινομένους
βάλλουσ᾽ ὑμᾶς, κἀν τοῖς ἱεροῖς
πᾶς τις ἐφ᾽ ὑμῖν ὀρνιθευτὴς
ἵστησι βρόχους παγίδας ῥάβδους
ἕρκη νεφέλας δίκτυα πηκτάς:
εἶτα λαβόντες πωλοῦσ᾽ ἀθρόους:
οἱ δ᾽ ὠνοῦνται βλιμάζοντες:
κοὐδ᾽ οὖν, εἴπερ ταῦτα δοκεῖ δρᾶν,
ὀπτησάμενοι παρέθενθ᾽ ὑμᾶς,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπικνῶσιν τυρὸν ἔλαιον
σίλφιον ὄξος καὶ τρίψαντες
κατάχυσμ᾽ ἕτερον γλυκὺ καὶ λιπαρόν,
κἄπειτα κατεσκέδασαν θερμὸν
τοῦτο καθ᾽ ὑμῶν
αὐτῶν ὥσπερ κενεβρείων. **Χορός**

πολὺ δὴ πολὺ δὴ χαλεπωτάτους λόγους
ἤνεγκας ἄνθρωφ᾽. ὡς ἐδάκρυσά γ᾽ ἐμῶν
πατέρων κάκην, οἳ
τάσδε τὰς τιμὰς προγόνων παραδόντων
ἐπ᾽ ἐμοῦ κατέλυσαν.
σὺ δέ μοι κατὰ δαίμονα καί τινα συντυχίαν
ἀγαθὴν ἥκεις ἐμοὶ σωτήρ.
ἀναθεὶς γὰρ ἐγώ σοι
τὰ νεοττία κἀμαυτὸν οἰκήσω. **Χορός**

ἀλλ᾽ ὅ τι χρὴ δρᾶν, σὺ δίδασκε παρών: ὡς ζῆν οὐκ ἄξιον ἡμῖν,
εἰ μὴ κομιούμεθα παντὶ τρόπῳ τὴν ἡμετέραν βασιλείαν. **Πισθέταιρος**

καὶ δὴ τοίνυν πρῶτα διδάσκω μίαν ὀρνίθων πόλιν εἶναι,
κἄπειτα τὸν ἀέρα πάντα κύκλῳ καὶ πᾶν τουτὶ τὸ μεταξὺ
περιτειχίζειν μεγάλαις πλίνθοις ὀπταῖς ὥσπερ Βαβυλῶνα.

Ἔποψ

ὦ Κεβριόνη καὶ Πορφυρίων ὡς σμερδαλέον τὸ πόλισμα.

Πισθέταιρος

κἄπειτ᾽ ἢν τοῦτ᾽ ἐπανεστήκῃ, τὴν ἀρχὴν τὸν Δί᾽ ἀπαιτεῖν:
κἂν μὲν μὴ φῇ μηδ᾽ ἐθελήσῃ μηδ᾽ εὐθὺς γνωσιμαχήσῃ,
ἱερὸν πόλεμον πρωὐδᾶν αὐτῷ, καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσιν ἀπειπεῖν
διὰ τῆς χώρας τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐστυκόσι μὴ διαφοιτᾶν,
ὥσπερ πρότερον μοιχεύσοντες τὰς Ἀλκμήνας κατέβαινον
καὶ τὰς Ἀλόπας καὶ τὰς Σεμέλας: ἤνπερ δ᾽ ἐπίωσ᾽, ἐπιβάλλειν
σφραγῖδ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τὴν ψωλήν, ἵνα μὴ βινῶσ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἐκείνας.
τοῖς δ᾽ ἀνθρώποις ὄρνιν ἕτερον πέμψαι κήρυκα κελεύω,
ὡς ὀρνίθων βασιλευόντων θύειν ὄρνισι τὸ λοιπόν,
κἄπειτα θεοῖς ὕστερον αὖθις: προσνείμασθαι δὲ πρεπόντως
τοῖσι θεοῖσιν τῶν ὀρνίθων ὃς ἂν ἁρμόττῃ καθ᾽ ἕκαστον:
ἢν Ἀφροδίτῃ θύῃ, πυροὺς ὄρνιθι φαληρίδι θύειν:
ἢν δὲ Ποσειδῶνί τις οἶν θύῃ, νήττῃ πυροὺς καθαγίζειν:
ἢν δ᾽ Ἡρακλέει θύῃ τι, λάρῳ ναστοὺς θύειν μελιτοῦντας:
κἂν Διὶ θύῃ βασιλεῖ κριόν, βασιλεύς ἐστ᾽ ὀρχίλος ὄρνις,
ᾧ προτέρῳ δεῖ τοῦ Διὸς αὐτοῦ σέρφον ἐνόρχην σφαγιάζειν.

Ἠυελπίδης

ἤσθην σέρφῳ σφαγιαζομένῳ. βροντάτω νῦν ὁ μέγας Ζάν.

Χορός

καὶ πῶς ἡμᾶς νομιοῦσι θεοὺς ἄνθρωποι κοὐχὶ κολοιούς,
οἳ πετόμεσθα πτέρυγάς τ᾽ ἔχομεν;

Πισθέταιρος
ληρεῖς: καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ ὅ γ᾽ Ἑρμῆς
πέτεται θεὸς ὢν πτέρυγάς τε φορεῖ, κἄλλοι γε θεοὶ πάνυ πολλοί.
αὐτίκα Νίκη πέτεται πτερύγοιν χρυσαῖν καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ Ἔρως γε:
Ἥρην δέ γ᾽ Ὅμηρος ἔφασκ᾽ ἰκέλην εἶναι τρήρωνι πελείῃ.

Ἠυελπίδης

ὁ Ζεὺς δ᾽ ἡμῖν οὐ βροντήσας πέμψει πτερόεντα κεραυνόν;

Πισθέταιρος

ἢν δ᾽ οὖν ὑμᾶς μὲν ὑπ᾽ ἀγνοίας εἶναι νομίσωσι τὸ μηδέν,
τούτους δὲ θεοὺς τοὺς ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ τότε χρὴ στρούθων νέφος ἀρθὲν
καὶ σπερμολόγων ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν τὸ σπέρμ᾽ αὐτῶν ἀνακάψαι:
κἄπειτ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἡ Δημήτηρ πυροὺς πεινῶσι μετρείτω.

Ἐυελπίδης

οὐκ ἐθελήσει μὰ Δί᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὄψει προφάσεις αὐτὴν παρέχουσαν.

Πισθέταιρος

οἱ δ᾽ αὖ κόρακες τῶν ζευγαρίων, οἷσιν τὴν γῆν καταροῦσιν,
καὶ τῶν προβάτων τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐκκοψάντων ἐπὶ πείρᾳ:
εἶθ᾽ ὅ γ᾽ Ἀπόλλων ἰατρός γ᾽ ὢν ἰάσθω: μισθοφορεῖ δέ.

Ἐυελπίδης

μὴ πρίν γ᾽ ἂν ἐγὼ τὼ βοιδαρίω τὼμὼ πρώτιστ᾽ ἀποδῶμαι.

Πισθέταιρος

ἢν δ᾽ ἡγῶνται σὲ θεὸν σὲ βίον σὲ δὲ γῆν σὲ Κρόνον σὲ Ποσειδῶ,
ἀγάθ᾽ αὐτοῖσιν πάντα παρέσται.

Ἔποψ
λέγε δή μοι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἕν.

Πισθέταιρος

πρῶτα μὲν αὐτῶν τὰς οἰνάνθας οἱ πάρνοπες οὐ κατέδονται,
ἀλλὰ γλαυκῶν λόχος εἷς αὐτοὺς καὶ κερχνήδων ἐπιτρίψει.
εἶθ᾽ οἱ κνῖπες καὶ ψῆνες ἀεὶ τὰς συκᾶς οὐ κατέδονται,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀναλέξει πάντας καθαρῶς αὐτοὺς ἀγέλη μία κιχλῶν.

Ἔποψ

πλουτεῖν δὲ πόθεν δώσομεν αὐτοῖς; καὶ γὰρ τούτου σφόδρ᾽ ἐρῶσιν.

Πισθέταιρος

τὰ μέταλλ᾽ αὐτοῖς μαντευομένοις οὗτοι δώσουσι τὰ χρηστά,
τάς τ᾽ ἐμπορίας τὰς κερδαλέας πρὸς τὸν μάντιν κατεροῦσιν,
ὥστ᾽ ἀπολεῖται τῶν ναυκλήρων οὐδείς.

Ἔποψ
πῶς οὐκ ἀπολεῖται;

Πισθέταιρος

προερεῖ τις ἀεὶ τῶν ὀρνίθων μαντευομένῳ περὶ τοῦ πλοῦ:
‘νυνὶ μὴ πλεῖ, χειμὼν ἔσται:’ ‘νυνὶ πλεῖ, κέρδος ἐπέσται.’

Ἐυελπίδης

γαῦλον κτῶμαι καὶ ναυκληρῶ, κοὐκ ἂν μείναιμι παρ᾽ ὑμῖν.

Πισθέταιρος

τοὺς θησαυρούς τ᾽ αὐτοῖς δείξουσ᾽ οὓς οἱ πρότεροι κατέθεντο
τῶν ἀργυρίων: οὗτοι γὰρ ἴσασι: λέγουσι δέ τοι τάδε πάντες,
‘οὐδεὶς οἶδεν τὸν θησαυρὸν τὸν ἐμὸν πλὴν εἴ τις ἄρ᾽ ὄρνις.’

Ἐυελπίδης

πωλῶ γαῦλον, κτῶμαι σμινύην, καὶ τὰς ὑδρίας ἀνορύττω.

Ἔποψ

πῶς δ᾽ ὑγιείαν δώσουσ᾽ αὐτοῖς, οὖσαν παρὰ τοῖσι θεοῖσιν;

Πισθέταιρος

ἢν εὖ πράττωσ᾽, οὐχ ὑγιεία μεγάλη τοῦτ᾽ ἐστί; σάφ᾽ ἴσθι,
ὡς ἄνθρωπός γε κακῶς πράττων ἀτεχνῶς οὐδεὶς ὑγιαίνει.

Ἔποψ

πῶς δ᾽ ἐς γῆράς ποτ᾽ ἀφίξονται; καὶ γὰρ τοῦτ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ:
ἢ παιδάρι᾽ ὄντ᾽ ἀποθνῄσκειν δεῖ;

Πισθέταιρος
μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ τριακόσι᾽ αὐτοῖς
ἔτι προσθήσουσ᾽ ὄρνιθες ἔτη.

Ἔποψ
παρὰ τοῦ;

Πισθέταιρος
παρ᾽ ὅτου; παρ᾽ ἑαυτῶν.
οὐκ οἶσθ᾽ ὅτι πέντ᾽ ἀνδρῶν γενεὰς ζώει λακέρυζα κορώνη; **Ἐυελπίδης**

αἰβοῖ πολλῷ κρείττους οὗτοι τοῦ Διὸς ἡμῖν βασιλεύειν.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐ γὰρ πολλῷ;
πρῶτον μέν γ᾽ οὐχὶ νεὼς ἡμᾶς
οἰκοδομεῖν δεῖ λιθίνους αὐτοῖς,
οὐδὲ θυρῶσαι χρυσαῖσι θύραις,
ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὸ θάμνοις καὶ πρινιδίοις
οἰκήσουσιν. τοῖς δ᾽ αὖ σεμνοῖς
τῶν ὀρνίθων δένδρον ἐλάας
ὁ νεὼς ἔσται: κοὐκ ἐς Δελφοὺς
οὐδ᾽ εἰς Ἄμμων᾽ ἐλθόντες ἐκεῖ
θύσομεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ταῖσιν κομάροις
καὶ τοῖς κοτίνοις στάντες ἔχοντες
κριθὰς πυροὺς εὐξόμεθ᾽ αὐτοῖς
ἀνατείνοντες τὼ χεῖρ᾽ ἀγαθῶν
διδόναι τι μέρος: καὶ ταῦθ᾽ ἡμῖν
παραχρῆμ᾽ ἔσται
πυροὺς ὀλίγους προβαλοῦσιν. **Χορός**

ὦ φίλτατ᾽ ἐμοὶ πολὺ πρεσβυτῶν ἐξ ἐχθίστου μεταπίπτων,
οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως ἂν ἐγώ ποθ᾽ ἑκὼν τῆς σῆς γνώμης ἔτ᾽ ἀφείμην.

Χορός

ἐπαυχήσας δὲ τοῖσι σοῖς λόγοις
ἐπηπείλησα καὶ κατώμοσα,
ἢν σὺ παρ᾽ ἐμὲ θέμενος
ὁμόφρονας λόγους δικαίους
ἀδόλους ὁσίους
ἐπὶ θεοὺς ἴῃς, ἐμοὶ

Χορός

φρονῶν ξυνῳδά, μὴ πολὺν χρόνον
θεοὺς ἔτι σκῆπτρα τἀμὰ τρίψειν.

Χορός

ἀλλ᾽ ὅσα μὲν δεῖ ῥώμῃ πράττειν, ἐπὶ ταῦτα τεταξόμεθ᾽ ἡμεῖς:
ὅσα δὲ γνώμῃ δεῖ βουλεύειν, ἐπὶ σοὶ τάδε πάντ᾽ ἀνάκειται.

Ἔποψ

καὶ μὴν μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐχὶ νυστάζειν ἔτι
ὥρα ‘στὶν ἡμῖν οὐδὲ μελλονικιᾶν,
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα δεῖ τι δρᾶν: πρῶτον δέ γε
εἰσέλθετ᾽ ἐς νεοττιάν γε τὴν ἐμὴν
καὶ τἀμὰ κάρφη καὶ τὰ παρόντα φρύγανα,
καὶ τοὔνομ᾽ ἡμῖν φράσατον.

Πισθέταιρος
ἀλλὰ ῥᾴδιον.
ἐμοὶ μὲν ὄνομα Πισθέταιρος, τῳδεδὶ
Εὐελπίδης Κριῶθεν.

Ἔποψ
ἀλλὰ χαίρετον
ἄμφω.

Πισθέταιρος
δεχόμεθα.

Ἔποψ
δεῦρο τοίνυν εἴσιτον.

Πισθέταιρος

ἴωμεν: εἰσηγοῦ σὺ λαβὼν ἡμᾶς.

Ἔποψ
ἴθι.

Πισθέταιρος

ἀτὰρ τὸ δεῖνα, δεῦρ᾽ ἐπανάκρουσαι πάλιν.
φέρ᾽ ἴδω, φράσον νῷν, πῶς ἐγώ τε χοὐτοσὶ
ξυνεσόμεθ᾽ ὑμῖν πετομένοις οὐ πετομένω; **Ἔποψ**

καλῶς.

Πισθέταιρος
ὅρα νυν, ὡς ἐν Αἰσώπου λόγοις
ἐστὶν λεγόμενον δή τι, τὴν ἀλώπεχ᾽, ὡς
φλαύρως ἐκοινώνησεν αἰετῷ ποτέ.

Ἔποψ

μηδὲν φοβηθῇς: ἔστι γάρ τι ῥιζίον,
ὃ διατραγόντ᾽ ἔσεσθον ἐπτερωμένω.

Πισθέταιρος

οὕτω μὲν εἰσίωμεν. ἄγε δὴ Ξανθία
καὶ Μανόδωρε λαμβάνετε τὰ στρώματα.

Χορός

οὗτος σὲ καλῶ, σὲ λέγω.

Ἔποψ
τί καλεῖς;

Χορός
τούτους μὲν ἄγων μετὰ σαυτοῦ
ἀρίστισον εὖ: τὴν δ᾽ ἡδυμελῆ ξύμφωνον ἀηδόνα Μούσαις

κατάλειφ᾽ ἡμῖν δεῦρ᾽ ἐκβιβάσας, ἵνα παίσωμεν μετ᾽ ἐκείνης.

Πισθέταιρος

ὦ τοῦτο μεντοι νὴ Δί᾽ αὐτοῖσιν πιθοῦ:
ἐκβίβασον ἐκ τοῦ βουτόμου τοὐρνίθιον.

Ἠυελπίδης

ἐκβίβασον αὐτοῦ πρὸς θεῶν αὐτήν, ἵνα
καὶ νὼ θεασώμεσθα τὴν ἀηδόνα.

Ἔποψ

ἀλλ᾽ εἰ δοκεῖ σφῷν, ταῦτα χρὴ δρᾶν. ἡ Πρόκνη
ἔκβαινε καὶ σαυτὴν ἐπιδείκνυ τοῖς ξένοις.

Πισθέταιρος

ὦ Ζεῦ πολυτίμηθ᾽ ὡς καλὸν τοὐρνίθιον,
ὡς δ᾽ ἁπαλόν, ὡς δὲ λευκόν.

Ἠυελπίδης
ἆρά γ᾽ οἶσθ᾽ ὅτι
ἐγὼ διαμηρίζοιμ᾽ ἂν αὐτὴν ἡδέως; **Πισθέταιρος**

ὅσον δ᾽ ἔχει τὸν χρυσόν, ὥσπερ παρθένος.

Ἠυελπίδης

ἐγὼ μὲν αὐτὴν κἂν φιλῆσαί μοι δοκῶ.

Πισθέταιρος

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ κακόδαιμον ῥύγχος ὀβελίσκοιν ἔχει.

Ἠυελπίδης

ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ ᾠὸν νὴ Δί᾽ ἀπολέψαντα χρὴ
ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ λέμμα κᾆθ᾽ οὕτω φιλεῖν.

Ἔποψ

ἴωμεν.

Πισθέταιρος
ἡγοῦ δὴ σὺ νῷν τύχἀγαθῇ.

Χορός

ὦ φίλη, ὦ ξουθή,
ὦ φίλτατον ὀρνέων
πάντων, ξύννομε τῶν ἐμῶν
ὕμνων, ξύντροφ᾽ ἀηδοῖ,
ἦλθες ἦλθες ὤφθης,
ἡδὺν φθόγγον ἐμοὶ φέρουσ᾽.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ καλλιβόαν κρέκουσ᾽
αὐλὸν φθέγμασιν ἠρινοῖς,
ἄρχου τῶν ἀναπαίστων. **Χορός**

ἄγε δὴ φύσιν ἄνδρες ἀμαυρόβιοι, φύλλων γενεᾷ προσόμοιοι,
ὀλιγοδρανέες, πλάσματα πηλοῦ, σκιοειδέα φῦλ᾽ ἀμενηνά,
ἀπτῆνες ἐφημέριοι ταλαοὶ βροτοὶ ἀνέρες εἰκελόνειροι,
προσέχετε τὸν νοῦν τοῖς ἀθανάτοις ἡμῖν τοῖς αἰὲν ἐοῦσιν,
τοῖς αἰθερίοις τοῖσιν ἀγήρῳς τοῖς ἄφθιτα μηδομένοισιν,
ἵν᾽ ἀκούσαντες πάντα παρ᾽ ἡμῶν ὀρθῶς περὶ τῶν μετεώρων.
φύσιν οἰωνῶν γένεσίν τε θεῶν ποταμῶν τ᾽ Ἐρέβους τε Χάους τε
εἰδότες ὀρθῶς, Προδίκῳ παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ κλάειν εἴπητε τὸ λοιπόν.
Χάος ἦν καὶ Νὺξ Ἔρεβός τε μέλαν πρῶτον καὶ Τάρταρος εὐρύς,
γῆ δ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἀὴρ οὐδ᾽ οὐρανὸς ἦν: Ἐρέβους δ᾽ ἐν ἀπείροσι κόλποις
τίκτει πρώτιστον ὑπηνέμιον Νὺξ ἡ μελανόπτερος ᾠόν,
ἐξ οὗ περιτελλομέναις ὥραις ἔβλαστεν Ἔρως ὁ ποθεινός,
στίλβων νῶτον πτερύγοιν χρυσαῖν, εἰκὼς ἀνεμώκεσι δίναις.
οὗτος δὲ Χάει πτερόεντι μιγεὶς νυχίῳ κατὰ Τάρταρον εὐρὺν
ἐνεόττευσεν γένος ἡμέτερον, καὶ πρῶτον ἀνήγαγεν ἐς φῶς.
πρότερον δ᾽ οὐκ ἦν γένος ἀθανάτων, πρὶν Ἔρως ξυνέμειξεν ἅπαντα:
ξυμμιγνυμένων δ᾽ ἑτέρων ἑτέροις γένετ᾽ οὐρανὸς ὠκεανός τε
καὶ γῆ πάντων τε θεῶν μακάρων γένος ἄφθιτον. ὧδε μέν ἐσμεν
πολὺ πρεσβύτατοι πάντων μακάρων. ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ὡς ἐσμὲν Ἔρωτος
πολλοῖς δῆλον: πετόμεσθά τε γὰρ καὶ τοῖσιν ἐρῶσι σύνεσμεν:

πολλοὺς δὲ καλοὺς ἀπομωμοκότας παῖδας πρὸς τέρμασιν ὥρας
διὰ τὴν ἰσχὺν τὴν ἡμετέραν διεμήρισαν ἄνδρες ἐρασταί,
ὁ μὲν ὄρτυγα δοὺς ὁ δὲ πορφυρίων᾽ ὁ δὲ χῆν᾽ ὁ δὲ Περσικὸν ὄρνιν. **Χορός**

πάντα δὲ θνητοῖς ἐστὶν ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν τῶν ὀρνίθων τὰ μέγιστα.
πρῶτα μὲν ὥρας φαίνομεν ἡμεῖς ἦρος χειμῶνος ὀπώρας:
σπείρειν μέν, ὅταν γέρανος κρώζουσ᾽ ἐς τὴν Λιβύην μεταχωρῇ.
καὶ πηδάλιον τότε ναυκλήρῳ φράζει κρεμάσαντι καθεύδειν,
εἶτα δ᾽ Ὀρέστῃ χλαῖναν ὑφαίνειν, ἵνα μὴ ῥιγῶν ἀποδύῃ.
ἰκτῖνος δ᾽ αὖ μετὰ ταῦτα φανεὶς ἑτέραν ὥραν ἀποφαίνει,
ἡνίκα πεκτεῖν ὥρα προβάτων πόκον ἠρινόν: εἶτα χελιδών,
ὅτε χρὴ χλαῖναν πωλεῖν ἤδη καὶ ληδάριόν τι πρίασθαι.
ἐσμὲν δ᾽ ὑμῖν Ἄμμων Δελφοὶ Δωδώνη Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων.
ἐλθόντες γὰρ πρῶτον ἐπ᾽ ὄρνις οὕτω πρὸς ἅπαντα τρέπεσθε,
πρός τ᾽ ἐμπορίαν, καὶ πρὸς βιότου κτῆσιν, καὶ πρὸς γάμον ἀνδρός.
ὄρνιν τε νομίζετε πάνθ᾽ ὅσαπερ περὶ μαντείας διακρίνει:
φήμη γ᾽ ὑμῖν ὄρνις ἐστί, πταρμόν τ᾽ ὄρνιθα καλεῖτε,
ξύμβολον ὄρνιν, φωνὴν ὄρνιν, θεράποντ᾽ ὄρνιν, ὄνον ὄρνιν.
ἆρ᾽ οὐ φανερῶς ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν ἐσμὲν μαντεῖος Ἀπόλλων; **Χορός**

ἢν οὖν ἡμᾶς νομίσητε θεούς,
ἕξετε χρῆσθαι μάντεσι Μούσαις
αὔραις ὥραις χειμῶνι θέρει
μετρίῳ πνίγει: κοὐκ ἀποδράντες
καθεδούμεθ᾽ ἄνω σεμνυνόμενοι
παρὰ ταῖς νεφέλαις ὥσπερ χὠ Ζεύς:
ἀλλὰ παρόντες δώσομεν ὑμῖν
αὐτοῖς, παισίν, παίδων παισίν,
πλουθυγιείαν
εὐδαιμονίαν βίον εἰρήνην
νεότητα γέλωτα χοροὺς θαλίας
γάλα τ᾽ ὀρνίθων. ὥστε παρέσται
κοπιᾶν ὑμῖν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν:
οὕτω πλουτήσετε πάντες. **Χορός**

Μοῦσα λοχμαία,
τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιοτίγξ,
ποικίλη, μεθ᾽ ἧς ἐγὼ
νάπαισι καὶ κορυφαῖς ἐν ὀρείαις,

τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιοτίγξ,
ἰζόμενος μελίας ἐπὶ φυλλοκόμου,
τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιοτίγξ,
δι᾽ ἐμῆς γένυος ξουθῆς μελέων
Πανὶ νόμους ἱεροὺς ἀναφαίνω
σεμνά τε μητρὶ χορεύματ᾽ ὀρείᾳ,
τοτοτοτοτοτοτοτοτοτίγξ,
ἔνθεν ὡστερεὶ μέλιττα
Φρύνιχος ἀμβροσίων μελέων ἀπεβόσκετο καρπὸν ἀεὶ
φέρων γλυκεῖαν ᾠδάν.
τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιοτίγξ. **Χορός**

εἰ μετ᾽ ὀρνίθων τις ὑμῶν ᾧ θεαταὶ βούλεται
διαπλέκειν ζῶν ἡδέως τὸ λοιπόν, ὡς ἡμᾶς ἴτω.
ὅσα γάρ ἐστιν ἐνθάδ᾽ αἰσχρὰ τῷ νόμῳ κρατούμενα,
ταῦτα πάντ᾽ ἐστὶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν τοῖσιν ὄρνισιν καλά.
εἰ γὰρ ἐνθάδ᾽ ἐστὶν αἰσχρὸν τὸν πατέρα τύπτειν νόμῳ,
τοῦτ᾽ ἐκεῖ καλὸν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ἐστιν, ἤν τις τῷ πατρὶ
προσδραμὼν εἴπῃ πατάξας, ‘αἶρε πλῆκτρον, εἰ μαχεῖ.’
εἰ δὲ τυγχάνει τις ὑμῶν δραπέτης ἐστιγμένος,
ἀτταγᾶς οὗτος παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ποικίλος κεκλήσεται.
εἰ δὲ τυγχάνει τις ὢν Φρὺξ μηδὲν ἧττον Σπινθάρου,
φρυγίλος ὄρνις ἐνθάδ᾽ ἔσται, τοῦ Φιλήμονος γένους.
εἰ δὲ δοῦλός ἐστι καὶ Κὰρ ὥσπερ Ἐξηκεστίδης,
φυσάτω πάππους παρ᾽ ἡμῖν, καὶ φανοῦνται φράτερες.
εἰ δ᾽ ὁ Πεισίου προδοῦναι τοῖς ἀτίμοις τὰς πύλας
βούλεται, πέρδιξ γενέσθω, τοῦ πατρὸς νεοττίον:
ὡς παρ᾽ ἡμῖν οὐδὲν αἰσχρόν ἐστιν ἐκπερδικίσαι. **Χορός**

τοιάδε κύκνοι,
τιὸ τιὸ τιὰ τιὸ τιὸ τιοτίγξ,
συμμιγῆ βοὴν ὁμοῦ
πτεροῖς κρέκοντες ἴακχον Ἀπόλλω,
τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιοτίγξ,
ὄχθῳ ἐφεζόμενοι παρ᾽ Ἕβρον ποταμόν,
τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιοτίγξ,
διὰ δ᾽ αἰθέριον νέφος ἦλθε βοά:
πτῆξε δὲ φῦλά τε ποικίλα θηρῶν,
κύματά τ᾽ ἔσβεσε νήνεμος αἴθρη,

τοτοτοτοτοτοτοτοτοτίγξ:
πᾶς δ᾽ ἐπεκτύπησ᾽ Ὄλυμπος:
εἶλε δὲ θάμβος ἄνακτας: Ὀλυμπιάδες δὲ μέλος Χάριτες
Μοῦσαί τ᾽ ἐπωλόλυξαν.
τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιοτίγξ. **Χορός**

οὐδέν ἐστ᾽ ἄμεινον οὐδ᾽ ἥδιον ἢ φῦσαι πτερά.
αὐτίχ᾽ ὑμῶν τῶν θεατῶν εἴ τις ἦν ὑπόπτερος,
εἶτα πεινῶν τοῖς χοροῖσι τῶν τραγῳδῶν ἤχθετο,
ἐκπτόμενος ἂν οὗτος ἠρίστησεν ἐλθὼν οἴκαδε,
κᾆτ᾽ ἂν ἐμπλησθεὶς ἐφ᾽ ἡμᾶς αὖθις αὖ κατέπτετο.
εἴ τε Πατροκλείδης τις ὑμῶν τυγχάνει χεζητιῶν,
οὐκ ἂν ἐξίδισεν ἐς θοἰμάτιον, ἀλλ᾽ ἀνέπτετο,
κἀποπαρδὼν κἀναπνεύσας αὖθις αὖ κατέπτετο:
εἴ τε μοιχεύων τις ὑμῶν ἐστιν ὅστις τυγχάνει,
κᾆθ᾽ ὁρᾷ τὸν ἄνδρα τῆς γυναικὸς ἐν βουλευτικῷ,
οὗτος ἂν πάλιν παρ᾽ ὑμῶν πτερυγίσας ἀνέπτετο,
εἶτα βινήσας ἐκεῖθεν αὖθις αὖ κατέπτετο.
ἆρ᾽ ὑπόπτερον γενέσθαι παντός ἐστιν ἄξιον;
ὡς Διειτρέφης γε πυτιναῖα μόνον ἔχων πτερὰ
ἡρέθη φύλαρχος, εἶθ᾽ ἵππαρχος, εἶτ᾽ ἐξ οὐδενὸς
μεγάλα πράττει κἀστὶ νυνὶ ξουθὸς ἱππαλεκτρυών. **Πισθέταιρος**

ταυτὶ τοιαυτί: μὰ Δί᾽ ἐγὼ μὲν πρᾶγμά πω
γελοιότερον οὐκ εἶδον οὐδεπώποτε.

Ἠυελπίδης

ἐπὶ τῷ γελᾷς;

Πισθέταιρος
ἐπὶ τοῖσι σοῖς ὠκυπτέροις.
οἶσθ᾽ ᾧ μάλιστ᾽ ἔοικας ἐπτερωμένος;
εἰς εὐτέλειαν χηνὶ συγγεγραμμένῳ.

Ἠυελπίδης

σὺ δὲ κοψίχῳ γε σκάφιον ἀποτετιλμένῳ.

Πισθέταιρος

ταυτὶ μὲν ἠκάσμεσθα κατὰ τὸν Αἰσχύλον:
τάδ᾽ οὐχ ὑπ᾽ ἄλλων ἀλλὰ τοῖς αὐτῶν πτεροῖς.

Ἵεποψ

ἄγε δὴ τί χρὴ δρᾶν;

Πισθέταιρος
πρῶτον ὄνομα τῇ πόλει
θέσθαι τι μέγα καὶ κλεινόν, εἶτα τοῖς θεοῖς
θῦσαι μετὰ τοῦτο.

Ἐυελπίδης
ταῦτα κἀμοὶ συνδοκεῖ.

Ἵεποψ

φέρ᾽ ἴδω, τί δ᾽ ἡμῖν τοὔνομ᾽ ἔσται τῇ πόλει;

Ἐυελπίδης

βούλεσθε τὸ μέγα τοῦτο τοὐκ Λακεδαίμονος
Σπάρτην ὄνομα καλῶμεν αὐτήν;

Πισθέταιρος
Ἡράκλεις:
Σπάρτην γὰρ ἂν θείμην ἐγὼ τῇμῇ πόλει;
οὐδ᾽ ἂν χαμεύνῃ πάνυ γε κειρίαν γ᾽ ἔχων.

Ἐυελπίδης

τί δῆτ᾽ ὄνομ᾽ αὐτῇ θησόμεσθ᾽;

Ἵεποψ
ἐντευθενὶ
ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν καὶ τῶν μετεώρων χωρίων
χαῦνόν τι πάνυ.

Πισθέταιρος
βούλει Νεφελοκοκκυγίαν;

Ἔποψ

ἰοὺ ἰού:
καλόν γ᾽ ἀτεχνῶς σὺ καὶ μέγ᾽ ηὗρες τοὔνομα.

Ἐυελπίδης

ἆρ᾽ ἐστὶν αὐτηγὶ Νεφελοκοκκυγία,
ἵνα καὶ τὰ Θεογένους τὰ πολλὰ χρήματα
τά τ᾽ Αἰσχίνου γ᾽ ἅπαντα; **Πισθέταιρος**
καὶ λῷστον μὲν οὖν
τὸ Φλέγρας πεδίον, ἵν᾽ οἱ θεοὶ τοὺς γηγενεῖς
ἀλαζονευόμενοι καθυπερηκόντισαν.

Ἔποψ

λιπαρὸν τὸ χρῆμα τῆς πόλεως. τίς δαὶ θεὸς
πολιοῦχος ἔσται; τῷ ξανοῦμεν τὸν πέπλον;

Ἐυελπίδης

τί δ᾽ οὐκ Ἀθηναίαν ἐῶμεν Πολιάδα;

Πισθέταιρος

καὶ πῶς ἂν ἔτι γένοιτ᾽ ἂν εὔτακτος πόλις,
ὅπου θεὸς γυνὴ γεγονυῖα πανοπλίαν
ἕστηκ᾽ ἔχουσα, Κλεισθένης δὲ κερκίδα; **Ἐυελπίδης**

τίς δαὶ καθέξει τῆς πόλεως τὸ Πελαργικόν;

Ἔποψ

ὄρνις ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν τοῦ γένους τοῦ Περσικοῦ,
ὅσπερ λέγεται δεινότατος εἶναι πανταχοῦ
Ἄρεως νεοττός.

Ἐυελπίδης
ὦ νεοττὲ δέσποτα:
ὡς δ᾽ ὁ θεὸς ἐπιτήδειος οἰκεῖν ἐπὶ πετρῶν.

Πισθέταιρος

ἄγε νυν σὺ μὲν βάδιζε πρὸς τὸν ἀέρα
καὶ τοῖσι τειχίζουσι παραδιακόνει,
χάλικας παραφόρει, πηλὸν ἀποδὺς ὄργασον,
λεκάνην ἀνένεγκε, κατάπεσ᾽ ἀπὸ τῆς κλίμακος,
φύλακας κατάστησαι, τὸ πῦρ ἔγκρυπτ᾽ ἀεί,
κωδωνοφορῶν περίτρεχε καὶ κάθευδ᾽ ἐκεῖ:
κήρυκα δὲ πέμψον τὸν μὲν ἐς θεοὺς ἄνω,
ἕτερον δ᾽ ἄνωθεν ἦυ παρ᾽ ἀνθρώπους κάτω,
κἀκεῖθεν αὖθις παρ᾽ ἐμέ.

Ἐυελπίδης
σὺ δέ γ᾽ αὐτοῦ μένων
οἴμωζε παρ᾽ ἔμ᾽.

Πισθέταιρος
ἴθ᾽ ὦγάθ᾽ οἷ πέμπω σ᾽ ἐγώ.
οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄνευ σοῦ τῶνδ᾽ ἃ λέγω πεπράξεται.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἵνα θύσω τοῖσι καινοῖσιν θεοῖς,
τὸν ἱερέα πέμψοντα τὴν πομπὴν καλῶ.
παῖ παῖ, τὸ κανοῦν αἴρεσθε καὶ τὴν χέρνιβα.

Ἱερεύς

ὁμορροθῶ, συνθέλω,
συμπαραινέσας ἔχω
προσόδια μεγάλα σεμνὰ προσιέναι θεοῖσιν,
ἅμα δὲ προσέτι χάριτος ἕνεκα προβάτιόν τι θύειν.
ἴτω ἴτω δὲ Πυθιὰς βοὰ θεῷ,
συναδέτω δὲ Χαῖρις ᾠδάν. **Πισθέταιρος**

παῦσαι σὺ φυσῶν. Ἡράκλεις τουτὶ τί ἦν;
τουτὶ μὰ Δί᾽ ἐγὼ πολλὰ δὴ καὶ δείν᾽ ἰδὼν
οὔπω κόρακ᾽ εἶδον ἐμπεφορβειωμένον.

ἱερεῦ σὸν ἔργον, θῦε τοῖς καινοῖς θεοῖς.

Ἱερεύς

δράσω τάδ᾽. ἀλλὰ ποῦ ‘στιν ὁ τὸ κανοῦν ἔχων;
εὔχεσθε τῇ Ἑστίᾳ τῇ ὀρνιθείῳ καὶ τῷ ἰκτίνῳ τῷ ἑστιούχῳ καὶ ὄρνισιν Ὀλυμπίοις καὶ Ὀλυμπίῃσι πᾶσι καὶ πάσῃσιν — **Πισθέταιρος**

ὦ Σουνιέρακε χαῖρ᾽ ἄναξ Πελαργικέ.

Ἱερεύς

καὶ κύκνῳ Πυθίῳ καὶ Δηλίῳ καὶ Λητοῖ Ὀρτυγομήτρᾳ καὶ Ἀρτέμιδι Ἀκαλανθίδι —

Πισθέταιρος

οὐκέτι Κολαινὶς ἀλλ᾽ Ἀκαλανθὶς Ἄρτεμις.

Ἱερεύς

καὶ φρυγίλῳ Σαβαζίῳ καὶ στρούθῳ μεγάλῃ μητρὶ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων —

Πισθέταιρος

δέσποινα Κυβέλη, στροῦθε, μῆτερ Κλεοκρίτου.

Ἱερεύς

διδόναι Νεφελοκοκκυγιεῦσιν ὑγιείαν καὶ σωτηρίαν αὐτοῖσι καὶ Χίοισι —

Πισθέταιρος

880 Χίοισιν ἥσθην πανταχοῦ προσκειμένοις.

Ἱερεύς

καὶ ἥρωσιν ὄρνισι καὶ ἡρώων παισί, πορφυρίωνι καὶ πελεκᾶντι καὶ πελεκίνῳ καὶ φλέξιδι καὶ τέτρακι καὶ ταῶνι καὶ ἐλεᾷ καὶ βασκᾷ καὶ ἐλασᾷ καὶ ἐρωδιῷ καὶ καταρράκτῃ καὶ μελαγκορύφῳ καὶ αἰγιθάλλῳ — **Πισθέταιρος**

παῦ ἐς κόρακας, παῦσαι καλῶν. ἰοὺ ἰού,
ἐπὶ ποῖον ὦ κακόδαιμον ἱερεῖον καλεῖς
ἁλιαιέτους καὶ γῦπας; οὐχ ὁρᾷς ὅτι
ἰκτῖνος εἷς ἂν τοῦτό γ᾽ οἴχοιθ᾽ ἁρπάσας;
ἄπελθ᾽ ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν καὶ σὺ καὶ τὰ στέμματα:
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸς τουτογὶ θύσω μόνος.

Ἱερεύς

εἶτ᾽ αὖθις αὖ τἄρα σοι
δεῖ με δεύτερον μέλος
χέρνιβι θεοσεβὲς ὅσιον ἐπιβοᾶν, καλεῖν δὲ
μάκαρας, ἕνα τινὰ μόνον, εἴπερ ἱκανὸν ἔξετ᾽ ὄψον.
τὰ γὰρ παρόντα θύματ᾽ οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν
γένειόν ἐστι καὶ κέρατα. **Πισθέταιρος**

θύοντες εὐξώμεσθα τοῖς πτερίνοις θεοῖς.

Ποιητής

Νεφελοκοκκυγίαν τὰν εὐδαίμονα
κλῇσον ὦ Μοῦσα τεαῖς ἐν ὕμνων ἀοιδαῖς.

Πισθέταιρος

τουτὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα ποδαπόν; εἰπέ μοι τίς εἶ;

Ποιητής

ἐγὼ μελιγλώσσων ἐπέων ἰεὶς ἀοιδὰν
Μουσάων θεράπων ὀτρηρός,
κατὰ τὸν Ὅμηρον.

Πισθέταιρος

ἔπειτα δῆτα δοῦλος ὢν κόμην ἔχεις;

Ποιητής

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ πάντες ἐσμὲν οἱ διδάσκαλοι

Μουσάων θεράποντες ὀτρηροί,
κατὰ τὸν Ὅμηρον.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐκ ἐτὸς ὀτρηρὸν καὶ τὸ ληδάριον ἔχεις.
ἀτὰρ ᾧ ποιητὰ κατὰ τί δεῦρ᾽ ἀνεφθάρης; **Ποιητής**

μέλη πεποίηκ᾽ ἐς τὰς Νεφελοκοκκυγίας
τὰς ὑμετέρας κύκλιά τε πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ
καὶ παρθένεια καὶ κατὰ τὰ Σιμωνίδου.

Πισθέταιρος

ταυτὶ σὺ πότ᾽ ἐποίησας; ἀπὸ ποίου χρόνου;

Ποιητής

πάλαι πάλαι δὴ τήνδ᾽ ἐγὼ κλήζω πόλιν.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐκ ἄρτι θύω τὴν δεκάτην ταύτης ἐγώ,
καὶ τοὔνομ᾽ ὥσπερ παιδίῳ νῦν δὴ ‘θέμην;

Ποιητής

ἀλλά τις ὠκεῖα Μουσάων φάτις
οἷάπερ ἵππων ἀμαρυγά.
σὺ δὲ πάτερ κτίστορ Αἴτνας,
ζαθέων ἱερῶν ὁμώνυμε,
δὸς ἐμὶν ὅ τι περ
τεᾷ κεφαλᾷ θέλῃς
πρόφρων δόμεν ἐμὶν τείν.

Πισθέταιρος

τουτὶ παρέξει τὸ κακὸν ἡμῖν πράγματα,
εἰ μή τι τούτῳ δόντες ἀποφευξούμεθα.
οὗτος, σὺ μέντοι σπολάδα καὶ χιτῶν᾽ ἔχεις,

ἀπόδυθι καὶ δὸς τῷ ποιητῇ τῷ σοφῷ.
ἔχε τὴν σπολάδα: πάντως δέ μοι ῥιγῶν δοκεῖς.

Ποιητής

τόδε μὲν οὐκ ἀέκουσα φίλα
Μοῦσα δῶρον δέχεται:
τὺ δὲ τεᾷ φρενὶ μάθε Πινδάρειον ἔπος — **Πισθέταιρος**

ἄνθρωπος ἡμῶν οὐκ ἀπαλλαχθήσεται.

Ποιητής

νομάδεσσι γὰρ ἐν Σκύθαις
ἀλᾶται Στράτων,
ὃς ὑφαντοδόνατον ἔσθος οὐ πέπαται:
ἀκλεὴς δ᾽ ἔβα σπολὰς ἄνευ χιτῶνος.
ξύνες ὅ τοι λέγω.

Πισθέταιρος

ξυνῆχ᾽ ὅτι βούλει τὸν χιτωνίσκον λαβεῖν.
ἀπόδυθι: δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ποιητὴν ὠφελεῖν.
ἄπελθε τουτονὶ λαβών.

Ποιητής
ἀπέρχομαι,
κἀς τὴν πόλιν γ᾽ ἐλθὼν ποιήσω τοιαδί:
‘κλῆσον ὦ χρυσόθρονε τὰν τρομερὰν κρυεράν:
νιφόβολα πεδία πολύπορά τ᾽ ἤλυθον ἀλαλάν.’

Πισθέταιρος

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἤδη πέφευγας ταυταγὶ
τὰ κρυερὰ τονδὶ τὸν χιτωνίσκον λαβών.
τουτὶ μὰ Δί᾽ ἐγὼ τὸ κακὸν οὐδέποτ᾽ ἤλπισα,
οὕτω ταχέως τοῦτον πεπύσθαι τὴν πόλιν.
αὖθις σὺ περιχώρει λαβὼν τὴν χέρνιβα.
εὐφημία ‘στω.

Χρησμολόγος

μὴ κατάρξῃ τοῦ τράγου.

Πισθέταιρος

960 σὺ δ᾽ εἶ τίς;

Χρησμολόγος
ὅστις; χρησμολόγος.

Πισθέταιρος
οἴμωζέ νυν.

Χρησμολόγος

ὦ δαιμόνιε τὰ θεῖα μὴ φαύλως φέρε:
ὡς ἔστι Βάκιδος χρησμὸς ἄντικρυς λέγων
ἐς τὰς Νεφελοκοκκυγίας.

Πισθέταιρος
κὔπειτα πῶς
ταῦτ᾽ οὐκ ἐχρησμολόγεις σὺ πρὶν ἐμὲ τὴν πόλιν
965 τήνδ᾽ οἰκίσαι; **Χρησμολόγος**
τὸ θεῖον ἐνεπόδιζέ με.

Πισθέταιρος

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν οἷόν ἐστ᾽ ἀκοῦσαι τῶν ἐπῶν.

Χρησμολόγος

ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν οἰκήσωσι λύκοι πολιαί τε κορῶναι
ἐν ταὐτῷ τὸ μεταξὺ Κορίνθου καὶ Σικυῶνος, —

Πισθέταιρος

τί οὖν προσήκει δῆτ᾽ ἐμοὶ Κορινθίων;

Χρησμολόγος

ἠνίξαθ᾽ ὁ Βάκις τοῦτο πρὸς τὸν ἀέρα.
πρῶτον Πανδώρᾳ θῦσαι λευκότριχα κριόν:
ὃς δέ κ᾽ ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἔλθῃ πρώτιστα προφήτης,
τῷ δόμεν ἱμάτιον καθαρὸν καὶ καινὰ πέδιλα — **Πισθέταιρος**

ἔνεστι καὶ τὰ πέδιλα;

Χρησμολόγος
λαβὲ τὸ βιβλίον.
καὶ φιάλην δοῦναι, καὶ σπλάγχνων χεῖρ᾽ ἐπιπλῆσαι.

Πισθέταιρος

καὶ σπλάγχνα διδόν᾽ ἔνεστι;

Χρησμολόγος
λαβὲ τὸ βιβλίον.
κἂν μὲν θέσπιε κοῦρε ποιῇς ταῦθ᾽ ὡς ἐπιτέλλω,
αἰετὸς ἐν νεφέλῃσι γενήσεαι: αι᾽ δέ κε μὴ δῷς,
οὐκ ἔσει οὐ τρυγὼν οὐδ᾽ αἰετὸς οὐ δρυκολάπτης.

Πισθέταιρος

καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἔνεστ᾽ ἐνταῦθα;

Χρησμολόγος
λαβὲ τὸ βιβλίον.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐδὲν ἄρ᾽ ὅμοιός ἐσθ᾽ ὁ χρησμὸς τουτῳί,
ὃν ἐγὼ παρὰ τἀπόλλωνος ἐξεγραψάμην:
αὐτὰρ ἐπὴν ἄκλητος ἰὼν ἄνθρωπος ἀλαζὼν
λυπῇ θύοντας καὶ σπλαγχνεύειν ἐπιθυμῇ,
δὴ τότε χρὴ τύπτειν αὐτὸν πλευρῶν τὸ μεταξὺ — **Χρησμολόγος**

οὐδὲν λέγειν οἶμαί σε.

Πισθέταιρος
λαβὲ τὸ βιβλίον.

καὶ φείδου μηδὲν μηδ᾽ αἰετοῦ ἐν νεφέλῃσιν,
μήτ᾽ ἦν Λάμπων ᾖ μήτ᾽ ἦν ὁ μέγας Διοπείθης.

Χρησμολόγος

καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἔνεστ᾽ ἐνταῦθα;

Πισθέταιρος
λαβὲ τὸ βιβλίον.
990 οὐκ εἶ θύραζ᾽; ἐς κόρακας.

Χρησμολόγος
οἴμοι δείλαιος.

Πισθέταιρος

οὔκουν ἐτέρωσε χρησμολογήσεις ἐκτρέχων;

Μέτων

ἥκω παρ᾽ ὑμᾶς —

Πισθέταιρος
ἕτερον αὖ τουτὶ κακόν.
τί δ᾽ αὖ σὺ δράσων; τίς δ᾽ ἰδέα βουλεύματος;
τίς ἡ ‘πίνοια, τίς ὁ κόθορνος τῆς ὁδοῦ; **Μέτων**

995 γεωμετρῆσαι βούλομαι τὸν ἀέρα
ὑμῖν διελεῖν τε κατὰ γύας.

Πισθέταιρος
πρὸς τῶν θεῶν
σὺ δ᾽ εἶ τίς ἀνδρῶν;

Μέτων
ὅστις εἴμ᾽ ἐγώ; Μέτων,
ὃν οἶδεν Ἑλλὰς χὠ Κολωνός.

Πισθέταιρος
εἰπέ μοι,

ταυτὶ δέ σοι τί ἔστι;

Μέτων
κανόνες ἀέρος.
αὐτίκα γὰρ ἀήρ ἐστι τὴν ἰδέαν ὅλος
κατὰ πνιγέα μάλιστα. προσθεὶς οὖν ἐγὼ
τὸν κανόν᾽, ἄνωθεν τουτονὶ τὸν καμπύλον
ἐνθεὶς διαβήτην — μανθάνεις; **Πισθέταιρος**
οὐ μανθάνω.

Μέτων

ὀρθῷ μετρήσω κανόνι προστιθείς, ἵνα
ὁ κύκλος γένηται σοι τετράγωνος κἀν μέσῳ
ἀγορά, φέρουσαι δ᾽ ὦσιν εἰς αὐτὴν ὁδοὶ
ὀρθαὶ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ μέσον, ὥσπερ δ᾽ ἀστέρος
αὐτοῦ κυκλοτεροῦς ὄντος ὀρθαὶ πανταχῇ
ἀκτῖνες ἀπολάμπωσιν.

Πισθέταιρος
ἄνθρωπος Θαλῆς.
Μέτων — **Μέτων**
τί ἔστιν;

Πισθέταιρος
οἶσθ᾽ ὁτιὴ φιλῶ σ᾽ ἐγώ,
κἀμοὶ πιθόμενος ὑπαποκίνει τῆς ὁδοῦ.

Μέτων

τί δ᾽ ἐστὶ δεινόν;

Πισθέταιρος
ὥσπερ ἐν Λακεδαίμονι
ξενηλατοῦνται καὶ κεκίνηνταί τινες:
πληγαὶ συχναὶ κατ᾽ ἄστυ.

Μέτων
μῶν στασιάζετε;

Πισθέταιρος

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ δῆτ᾽.

Μέτων
ἀλλὰ πῶς;

Πισθέταιρος
ὁμοθυμαδὸν
σποδεῖν ἅπαντας τοὺς ἀλαζόνας δοκεῖ.

Μέτων

ὑπάγοιμί τἄρ᾽ ἄν.

Πισθέταιρος
νὴ Δί᾽ ὡς οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ἂν εἰ
φθαίης ἄν: ἐπίκεινται γὰρ ἐγγὺς αὐταιί.

Μέτων

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων.

Πισθέταιρος
οὐκ ἔλεγον ἐγὼ πάλαι;
οὐκ ἀναμετρήσεις σαυτὸν ἀπιὼν ἀλλαχῇ; **Ἐπίσκοπος**

ποῦ πρόξενοι;

Πισθέταιρος
τίς ὁ Σαρδανάπαλλος οὑτοσί;

Ἐπίσκοπος

ἐπίσκοπος ἥκω δεῦρο τῷ κυάμῳ λαχὼν
ἐς τὰς Νεφελοκοκκυγίας.

Πισθέταιρος
ἐπίσκοπος;
ἔπεμψε δὲ τίς σε δεῦρο;

Ἐπίσκοπος
φαῦλον βιβλίον
Τελέου.

Πισθέταιρος
τί; βούλει δῆτα τὸν μισθὸν λαβὼν
μὴ πράγματ᾽ ἔχειν ἀλλ᾽ ἀπιέναι; **Ἐπίσκοπος**
νὴ τοὺς θεούς.
ἐκκλησιάσαι δ᾽ οὖν ἐδεόμην οἴκοι μένων.
ἔστιν γὰρ ἃ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ πέπρακται Φαρνάκῃ.

Πισθέταιρος

ἄπιθι λαβών: ἔστιν δ᾽ ὁ μισθὸς οὑτοσί.

Ἐπίσκοπος

τουτὶ τί ἦν;

Πισθέταιρος
ἐκκλησία περὶ Φαρνάκου.

Ἐπίσκοπος

μαρτύρομαι τυπτόμενος ὢν ἐπίσκοπος.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐκ ἀποσοβήσεις; οὐκ ἀποίσεις τὼ κάδω;
οὐ δεινά; καὶ πέμπουσιν ἤδη ‘πισκόπους
ἐς τὴν πόλιν, πρὶν καὶ τεθύσθαι τοῖς θεοῖς; **Ψηφισματοπώλης**

ἐὰν δ᾽ ὁ Νεφελοκοκκυγιεὺς τὸν Ἀθηναῖον ἀδικῇ —

Πισθέταιρος

τουτὶ τί ἔστιν αὖ κακὸν τὸ βιβλίον;

Ψηφισματοπώλης

ψηφισματοπώλης εἰμὶ καὶ νόμους νέους
ἥκω παρ᾽ ὑμᾶς δεῦρο πωλήσων.

Πισθέταιρος
τὸ τί;

Ψηφισματοπώλης

χρῆσθαι Νεφελοκοκκυγιᾶς τοῖσδε τοῖς μέτροισι καὶ σταθμοῖσι καὶ ψηφίσμασι καθάπερ Ὀλοφύξιοι.

Πισθέταιρος

σὺ δέ γ᾽ οἷσπερ ὠτοτύξιοι χρήσει τάχα.

Ψηφισματοπώλης

οὗτος τί πάσχεις;

Πισθέταιρος
οὐκ ἀποίσεις τοὺς νόμους;
πικροὺς ἐγώ σοι τήμερον δείξω νόμους.

Ἐπίσκοπος

καλοῦμαι Πισθέταιρον ὕβρεως ἐς τὸν Μουνιχιῶνα μῆνα.

Πισθέταιρος

ἄληθες οὗτος; ἔτι γὰρ ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἦσθα σύ;

Ψηφισματοπώλης

ἐὰν δέ τις ἐξελαύνῃ τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ μὴ δέχηται κατὰ τὴν στήλην —

Πισθέταιρος

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, καὶ σὺ γὰρ ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἦσθ᾽ ἔτι;

Ἐπίσκοπος

ἀπολῶ σε καὶ γράφω σε μυρίας δραχμάς.

Πισθέταιρος

ἐγὼ δὲ σοῦ γε τὼ κάδω διασκεδῶ.

Ψηφισματοπώλης

μέμνησ᾽ ὅτε τῆς στήλης κατετίλας ἑσπέρας;

Πισθέταιρος

αἰβοῖ: λαβέτω τις αὐτόν. οὗτος οὐ μενεῖς;
ἀπίωμεν ἡμεῖς ὡς τάχιστ᾽ ἐντευθενὶ
θύσοντες εἴσω τοῖς θεοῖσι τὸν τράγον.

Χορός

ἤδη ‘μοὶ τῷ παντόπτᾳ
καὶ παντάρχᾳ θνητοὶ πάντες
θύσουσ᾽ εὐκταίαις εὐχαῖς.
πᾶσαν μὲν γὰρ γᾶν ὀπτεύω,
σῴζω δ᾽ εὐθαλεῖς καρποὺς
κτείνων παμφύλων γένναν
θηρῶν, ἃ πάντ᾽ ἐν γαίᾳ
ἐκ κάλυκος αὐξανόμενον γένυσι παμφάγοις
δένδρεσί τ᾽ ἐφημένα καρπὸν ἀποβόσκεται:
κτείνω δ᾽ οἳ κήπους εὐώδεις
φθείρουσιν λύμαις ἐχθίσταις,
ἑρπετά τε καὶ δάκετα πάνθ᾽ ὅσαπερ
ἔστιν ὑπ᾽ ἐμᾶς πτέρυγος ἐν φοναῖς ὄλλυται. **Χορός**

τῇδε μέντοι θἠμέρᾳ μάλιστ᾽ ἐπαναγορεύεται,
ἢν ἀποκτείνῃ τις ὑμῶν Διαγόραν τὸν Μήλιον,
λαμβάνειν τάλαντον, ἤν τε τῶν τυράννων τίς τινα
τῶν τεθνηκότων ἀποκτείνῃ, τάλαντον λαμβάνειν.
βουλόμεσθ᾽ οὖν νυν ἀνειπεῖν ταὐτὰ χἠμεῖς ἐνθάδε.
ἢν ἀποκτείνῃ τις ὑμῶν Φιλοκράτη τὸν Στρούθιον,
λήψεται τάλαντον, ἢν δὲ ζῶντά γ᾽ ἀγάγῃ, τέτταρα,
ὅτι συνείρων τοὺς σπίνους πωλεῖ καθ᾽ ἑπτὰ τοὐβολοῦ,

εἶτα φυσῶν τὰς κίχλας δείκνυσι καὶ λυμαίνεται,
τοῖς τε κοψίχοισιν ἐς τὰς ῥῖνας ἐγχεῖ τὰ πτερά,
τὰς περιστεράς θ᾽ ὁμοίως ξυλλαβὼν εἵρξας ἔχει,
κἀπαναγκάζει παλεύειν δεδεμένας ἐν δικτύῳ.
ταῦτα βουλόμεσθ᾽ ἀνειπεῖν: κεἴ τις ὄρνιθας τρέφει
εἰργμένους ὑμῶν ἐν αὐλῇ, φράζομεν μεθιέναι.
ἢν δὲ μὴ πίθησθε, συλληφθέντες ὑπὸ τῶν ὀρνέων
αὖθις ὑμεῖς αὖ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν δεδεμένοι παλεύσετε. **Χορός**

εὔδαιμον φῦλον πτηνῶν
οἰωνῶν, οἳ χειμῶνος μὲν
χλαίνας οὐκ ἀμπισχνοῦνται:
οὐδ᾽ αὖ θερμὴ πνίγους ἡμᾶς
ἀκτὶς τηλαυγὴς θάλπει:
ἀλλ᾽ ἀνθηρῶν λειμώνων
φύλλων τ᾽ ἐν κόλποις ναίω,
ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν ὁ θεσπέσιος ὀξὺ μέλος ἀχέτας
θάλπεσι μεσημβρινοῖς ἡλιομανὴς βοᾷ.
χειμάζω δ᾽ ἐν κοίλοις ἄντροις
νύμφαοις οὐρείαις ξυμπαίζων:
ἠρινά τε βοσκόμεθα παρθένια
λευκότροφα μύρτα Χαρίτων τε κηπεύματα. **Χορός**

τοῖς κριταῖς εἰπεῖν τι βουλόμεσθα τῆς νίκης πέρι,
ὅσ᾽ ἀγάθ᾽, ἢν κρίνωσιν ἡμᾶς, πᾶσιν αὐτοῖς δώσομεν,
ὥστε κρείττω δῶρα πολλῷ τῶν Ἀλεξάνδρου λαβεῖν.
πρῶτα μὲν γὰρ οὗ μάλιστα πᾶς κριτὴς ἐφίεται,
γλαῦκες ὑμᾶς οὔποτ᾽ ἐπιλείψουσι Λαυρειωτικαί:
ἀλλ᾽ ἐνοικήσουσιν ἔνδον, ἔν τε τοῖς βαλλαντίοις
ἐννεοττεύσουσι κἀκλέψουσι μικρὰ κέρματα.
εἶτα πρὸς τούτοισιν ὥσπερ ἐν ἱεροῖς οἰκήσετε:
τὰς γὰρ ὑμῶν οἰκίας ἐρέψομεν πρὸς αἰετόν:
κἂν λαχόντες ἀρχίδιον εἶθ᾽ ἁρπάσαι βούλησθέ τι,
ὀξὺν ἱερακίσκον ἐς τὰς χεῖρας ὑμῖν δώσομεν.
ἢν δέ που δειπνῆτε, πρηγορεῶνας ὑμῖν πέμψομεν.
ἢν δὲ μὴ κρίνητε, χαλκεύεσθε μηνίσκους φορεῖν
ὥσπερ ἀνδριάντες: ὡς ὑμῶν ὃς ἂν μὴ μῆν᾽ ἔχῃ,
ὅταν ἔχητε χλανίδα λευκήν, τότε μάλισθ᾽ οὕτω δίκην
δώσεθ᾽ ἡμῖν, πᾶσι τοῖς ὄρνισι κατατιλώμενοι. **Πισθέταιρος**

τὰ μὲν ἱέρ᾽ ἡμῖν ἐστιν ὦρνιθες καλά:
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ τείχους πάρεστιν ἄγγελος
οὐδείς, ὅτου πευσόμεθα τἀκεῖ πράγματα.
ἀλλ᾽ οὑτοσὶ τρέχει τις Ἀλφειὸν πνέων.

Ἄγγελος Α

ποῦ ποῦ ‘στι, ποῦ ποῦ ποῦ ‘στι, ποῦ ποῦ ποῦ ‘στι ποῦ,
ποῦ Πισθέταιρός ἐστιν ἄρχων;

Πισθέταιρος
οὑτοσί.

Ἄγγελος Α

ἐξῳκοδόμηταί σοι τὸ τεῖχος.

Πισθέταιρος
εὖ λέγεις.

Ἄγγελος Α

κάλλιστον ἔργον καὶ μεγαλοπρεπέστατον:
ὥστ᾽ ἂν ἐπάνω μὲν Προξενίδης ὁ Κομπασεὺς
καὶ Θεογένης ἐναντίω δύ᾽ ἅρματε,
ἵππων ὑπόντων μέγεθος ὅσον ὁ δούριος,
ὑπὸ τοῦ πλάτους ἂν παρελασαίτην.

Πισθέταιρος
Ἡράκλεις.

Ἄγγελος Α

τὸ δὲ μῆκός ἐστι, καὶ γὰρ ἐμέτρησ᾽ αὖτ᾽ ἐγώ,
ἑκατοντορόγυιον.

Πισθέταιρος
ὦ Πόσειδον τοῦ μάκρους.
τίνες ᾠκοδόμησαν αὐτὸ τηλικουτονί; **Ἄγγελος Α**

ὄρνιθες, οὐδεὶς ἄλλος, οὐκ Αἰγύπτιος
πλινθοφόρος, οὐ λιθουργός, οὐ τέκτων παρῆν,
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτόχειρες, ὥστε θαυμάζειν ἐμέ.
ἐκ μέν γε Λιβύης ἦκον ὡς τρισμύριαι
γέρανοι θεμελίους καταπεπωκυῖαι λίθους.
τούτους δ᾽ ἐτύκιζον αἱ κρέκες τοῖς ῥύγχεσιν.
ἕτεροι δ᾽ ἐπλινθοφόρουν πελαργοὶ μύριοι:
ὕδωρ δ᾽ ἐφόρουν κάτωθεν ἐς τὸν ἀέρα
οἱ χαραδριοὶ καὶ τἄλλα ποτόμι᾽ ὄρνεα.

Πισθέταιρος

ἐπηλοφόρουν δ᾽ αὐτοῖσι τίνες;

Ἄγγελος Α
ἐρωδιοὶ
λεκάναισι.

Πισθέταιρος
τὸν δὲ πηλὸν ἐνεβάλλοντο πῶς;

Ἄγγελος Α

τοῦτ᾽ ᾦγάθ᾽ ἐξηύρητο καὶ σοφώτατα:
οἱ χῆνες ὑποτύπτοντες ὥσπερ ταῖς ἅμαις
ἐς τὰς λεκάνας ἐνέβαλλον αὐτοῖς τοῖν ποδοῖν.

Πισθέταιρος

τί δῆτα πόδες ἂν οὐκ ἂν ἐργασαίατο;

Ἄγγελος Α

καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ αἱ νῆτταί γε περιεζωσμέναι
ἐπλινθοφόρουν: ἄνω δὲ τὸν ὑπαγωγέα
ἐπέτοντ᾽ ἔχουσαι κατόπιν †ὥσπερ παιδία
τὸν πηλὸν ἐν τοῖς στόμασιν† αἱ χελιδόνες.

Πισθέταιρος

τί δῆτα μισθωτοὺς ἂν ἔτι μισθοῖτό τις;
φέρ᾽ ἴδω, τί δαί; τὰ ξύλινα τοῦ τείχους τίνες
ἀπηργάσαντ᾽; **Ἄγγελος Α**
ὄρνιθες ἦσαν τέκτονες
σοφώτατοι πελεκᾶντες, οἳ τοῖς ῥύγχεσιν
ἀπεπελέκησαν τὰς πύλας: ἦν δ᾽ ὁ κτύπος
αὐτῶν πελεκώντων ὥσπερ ἐν ναυπηγίῳ.
καὶ νῦν ἅπαντ᾽ ἐκεῖνα πεπύλωται πύλαις
καὶ βεβαλάνωται καὶ φυλάττεται κύκλῳ,
ἐφοδεύεται, κωδωνοφορεῖται, πανταχῇ,
φυλακαὶ καθεστήκασι καὶ φρυκτωρίαι
ἐν τοῖσι πύργοις. ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ μὲν ἀποτρέχων
ἀπονίψομαι: σὺ δ᾽ αὐτὸς ἤδη τἄλλα δρᾶ.

Χορός

οὗτος τί ποιεῖς; ἆρα θαυμάζεις ὅτι
οὕτω τὸ τεῖχος ἐκτετείχισται ταχύ; **Πισθέταιρος**

νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς ἔγωγε: καὶ γὰρ ἄξιον:
ἴσα γὰρ ἀληθῶς φαίνεταί μοι ψεύδεσιν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅδε φύλαξ γὰρ τῶν ἐκεῖθεν ἄγγελος
ἐσθεῖ πρὸς ἡμᾶς δεῦρο πυρρίχην βλέπων.

Ἄγγελος Β

ἰοὺ ἰού, ἰοὺ ἰού, ἰοὺ ἰού.

Πισθέταιρος

τί τὸ πρᾶγμα τουτί;

Ἄγγελος Β.
δεινότατα πεπόνθαμεν.
τῶν γὰρ θεῶν τις ἄρτι τῶν παρὰ τοῦ Διὸς
διὰ τῶν πυλῶν εἰσέπτετ᾽ ἐς τὸν ἀέρα,
λαθὼν κολοιοὺς φύλακας ἡμεροσκόπους.

Πισθέταιρος

ὦ δεινὸν ἔργον καὶ σχέτλιον εἰργασμένος.
τίς τῶν θεῶν;

Ἄγγελος Β.
οὐκ ἴσμεν: ὅτι δ᾽ εἶχε πτερά,
τοῦτ᾽ ἴσμεν.

Πισθέταιρος
οὔκουν δῆτα περιπόλους ἐχρῆν
πέμψαι κατ᾽ αὐτὸν εὐθύς; **Ἄγγελος Β.**
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπέμψαμεν
τρισμυρίους ἱέρακας ἱπποτοξότας,
χωρεῖ δὲ πᾶς τις ὄνυχας ἠγκυλωμένος,
κερχνῆς τριόρχης γὺψ κύμινδις αἰετός:
ῥύμῃ τε καὶ πτεροῖσι καὶ ῥοιζήμασιν
αἰθὴρ δονεῖται τοῦ θεοῦ ζητουμένου:
κἄστ᾽ οὐ μακρὰν ἄπωθεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐνταῦθά που
ἤδη ‘στίν.

Πισθέταιρος
οὔκουν σφενδόνας δεῖ λαμβάνειν
καὶ τόξα; χώρει δεῦρο πᾶς ὑπηρέτης:
τόξευε παῖε, σφενδόνην τίς μοι δότω.

Χορός

πόλεμος αἴρεται, πόλεμος οὐ φατὸς
πρὸς ἐμὲ καὶ θεούς. ἀλλὰ φύλαττε πᾶς
ἀέρα περινέφελον, ὃν ἔρεβος ἐτέκετο,
μή σε λάθῃ θεῶν τις ταύτῃ περῶν: **Χορός**

... ἄθρει δὲ πᾶς κύκλῳ σκοπῶν,
ὡς ἐγγὺς ἤδη δαίμονος πεδαρσίου
δίνης πτερωτὸς φθόγγος ἐξακούεται.

Πισθέταιρος

αὕτη σύ, ποῖ ποῖ ποῖ πέτει; μέν᾽ ἥσυχος,
ἔχ᾽ ἀτρέμας: αὐτοῦ στῆθ᾽: ἐπίσχες τοῦ δρόμου.

τίς εἶ; ποδαπή; λέγειν ἐχρῆν ὁπόθεν πότ᾽ εἶ.

Ἶρις

παρὰ τῶν θεῶν ἔγωγε τῶν Ὀλυμπίων.

Πισθέταιρος

ὄνομα δέ σο. τί ἐστι; πλοῖον ἢ κυνῆ;

Ἶρις

Ἶρις ταχεῖα.

Πισθέταιρος
Πάραλος ἢ Σαλαμινία;

Ἶρις

τί δὲ τοῦτο;

Πισθέταιρος
ταυτηνί τις οὐ συλλήψεται
ἀναπτόμενος τρίορχος; **Ἶρις**
ἐμὲ συλλήψεται;
τί ποτ᾽ ἐστὶ τουτὶ τὸ κακόν; **Πισθέταιρος**
οἰμώξει μακρά.

Ἶρις

ἄτοπόν γε τουτὶ πρᾶγμα.

Πισθέταιρος
κατὰ ποίας πύλας
εἰσῆλθες ἐς τὸ τεῖχος ὦ μιαρωτάτη; **Ἶρις**

οὐκ οἶδα μὰ Δί᾽ ἔγωγε κατὰ ποίας πύλας.

Πισθέταιρος

ἥκουσας αὐτῆς οἷον εἰρωνεύεται;
πρὸς τοὺς κολοιάρχας προσῆλθες; οὐ λέγεις;
σφραγῖδ᾽ ἔχεις παρὰ τῶν πελαργῶν; **Ἶρις**
τί τὸ κακόν.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐκ ἔλαβες;

Ἶρις
ὑγιαίνεις μέν;

Πισθέταιρος
οὐδὲ σύμβολον
ἐπέβαλεν ὀρνίθαρχος οὐδείς σοι παρών; **Ἶρις**

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐκ ἔμοιγ᾽ ἐπέβαλεν οὐδεὶς ὦ μέλε.

Πισθέταιρος

κἄπειτα δῆθ᾽ οὕτω σιωπῇ διαπέτει
διὰ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἀλλοτρίας καὶ τοῦ χάους;

Ἶρις

ποίᾳ γὰρ ἄλλῃ χρὴ πέτεσθαι τοὺς θεούς;

Πισθέταιρος

οὐκ οἶδα μὰ Δί᾽ ἔγωγε: τῇδε μὲν γὰρ οὔ.
ἀδικεῖς δὲ καὶ νῦν. ἆρά γ᾽ οἶσθα τοῦθ᾽ ὅτι
δικαιότατ᾽ ἂν ληφθεῖσα πασῶν Ἰρίδων
ἀπέθανες, εἰ τῆς ἀξίας ἐτύγχανες; **Ἶρις**

ἀλλ᾽ ἀθάνατός εἰμ᾽.

Πισθέταιρος
ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως ἂν ἀπέθανες.
δεινότατα γάρ τοι πεισόμεσθ᾽, ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ,
εἰ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἄρχομεν, ὑμεῖς δ᾽ οἱ θεοὶ

ἀκολαστανεῖτε, κοὐδέπω γνώσεσθ᾽ ὅτι
ἀκροατέον ὑμῖν ἐν μέρει τῶν κρειττόνων.
φράσον δέ τοί μοι τὼ πτέρυγε ποῖ ναυστολεῖς; **Ἶρις**

ἐγώ; πρὸς ἀνθρώπους πέτομαι παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς
φράσουσα θύειν τοῖς Ὀλυμπίοις θεοῖς
μηλοσφαγεῖν τε βουθύτοις ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάραις
κνισᾶν τ᾽ ἀγυιάς.

Πισθέταιρος
τί σὺ λέγεις; ποίοις θεοῖς;

Ἶρις

ποίοισιν; ἡμῖν τοῖς ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοῖς.

Πισθέταιρος

θεοὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς;

Ἶρις
τίς γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἄλλος θεός;

Πισθέταιρος

ὄρνιθες ἀνθρώποισι νῦν εἰσιν θεοί,
οἷς θυτέον αὐτούς, ἀλλὰ μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ τῷ Διί.

Ἶρις

ὦ μῶρε μῶρε μὴ θεῶν κίνει φρένας
δεινάς, ὅπως μή σου γένος πανώλεθρον
Διὸς μακέλλῃ πᾶν ἀναστρέψῃ Δίκη,
λιγνὺς δὲ σῶμα καὶ δόμων περιπτυχὰς
καταιθαλώσῃ σου Λικυμνίαις βολαῖς.

Πισθέταιρος

ἄκουσον αὖτη: παῦε τῶν παφλασμάτων:
ἔχ᾽ ἀτρέμα. φέρ᾽ ἴδω, πότερα Λυδὸν ἢ Φρύγα

ταυτὶ λέγουσα μορμολύττεσθαι δοκεῖς;
ἆρ᾽ οἶσθ᾽ ὅτι Ζεὺς εἴ με λυπήσει πέρα,
μέλαθρα μὲν αὐτοῦ καὶ δόμους Ἀμφίονος
καταιθαλώσω πυρφόροισιν αἰετοῖς;
πέμψω δὲ πορφυρίωνας ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν
ὄρνις ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν παρδαλᾶς ἐνημμένους
πλεῖν ἑξακοσίους τὸν ἀριθμόν. καὶ δή ποτε
εἷς Πορφυρίων αὐτῷ παρέσχε πράγματα.
σὺ δ᾽ εἴ με λυπήσεις τι, τῆς διακόνου
πρώτης ἀνατείνας τὼ σκέλει διαμηριῶ
τὴν Ἶριν αὐτήν, ὥστε θαυμάζειν ὅπως
οὕτω γέρων ὢν στύομαι τριέμβολον.

Ἶρις

διαρραγείης ὦ μέλ᾽ αὐτοῖς ῥήμασιν.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐκ ἀποσοβήσεις; οὐ ταχέως; εὐρὰξ πατάξ.

Ἶρις

ἦ μήν σε παύσει τῆς ὕβρεως οὑμὸς πατήρ.

Πισθέταιρος

οἴμοι τάλας. οὔκουν ἐτέρωσε πετομένη
καταιθαλώσεις τῶν νεωτέρων τινά; **Χορός**

ἀποκεκλῄκαμεν διογενεῖς θεοὺς
μηκέτι τὴν ἐμὴν διαπερᾶν πόλιν,
μηδέ γέ τιν᾽ ἱερόθυτον ἀνὰ δάπεδον ἔτι
τῇδε βροτῶν θεοῖσι πέμπειν καπνόν.

Πισθέταιρος

δεινόν γε τὸν κήρυκα τὸν παρὰ τοὺς βροτοὺς
οἰχόμενον, εἰ μηδέποτε νοστήσει πάλιν.

Κῆρυξ

ὦ Πισθέταιρ᾽ ὦ μακάρι᾽ ὦ σοφώτατε,
ὦ κλεινότατ᾽ ὦ σοφώτατ᾽ ὦ γλαφυρώτατε,
ὦ τρισμακάρι᾽ ὦ κατακέλευσον.

Πισθέταιρος
τί σὺ λέγεις;

Κῆρυξ

στεφάνῳ σε χρυσῷ τῷδε σοφίας οὕνεκα
στεφανοῦσι καὶ τιμῶσιν οἱ πάντες λεῴ.

Πισθέταιρος

δέχομαι. τί δ᾽ οὕτως οἱ λεὼ τιμῶσί με;

Κῆρυξ

ὦ κλεινοτάτην αἰθέριον οἰκίσας πόλιν,
οὐκ οἶσθ᾽ ὅσην τιμὴν παρ᾽ ἀνθρώποις φέρει,
ὅσους τ᾽ ἐραστὰς τῆσδε τῆς χώρας ἔχεις.
πρὶν μὲν γὰρ οἰκίσαι σε τήνδε τὴν πόλιν,
ἐλακωνομάνουν ἅπαντες ἄνθρωποι τότε,
ἐκόμων ἐπείνων ἐρρύπων ἐσωκράτουν
σκυτάλι᾽ ἐφόρουν, νυνὶ δ᾽ ὑποστρέψαντες αὖ
ὀρνιθομανοῦσι, πάντα δ᾽ ὑπὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς
ποιοῦσιν ἅπερ ὄρνιθες ἐκμιμούμενοι:
πρῶτον μὲν εὐθὺς πάντες ἐξ εὐνῆς ἅμα
ἐπέτονθ᾽ ἕωθεν ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς ἐπὶ νομόν:
κἄπειτ᾽ ἂν ἅμα κατῆραν ἐς τὰ βιβλία:
εἶτ᾽ ἀπενέμοντ᾽ ἐνταῦθα τὰ ψηφίσματα.
ὠρνιθομάνουν δ᾽ οὕτω περιφανῶς ὥστε καὶ
πολλοῖσιν ὀρνίθων ὀνόματ᾽ ἦν κείμενα.
πέρδιξ μὲν εἷς κάπηλος ὠνομάζετο
χωλός, Μενίππῳ δ᾽ ἦν χελιδὼν τοὔνομα,
Ὀπουντίῳ δ᾽ ὀφθαλμὸν οὐκ ἔχων κόραξ,
κορυδὸς Φιλοκλέει, χηναλώπηξ Θεογένει,

ἶβις Λυκούργῳ, Χαιρεφῶντι νυκτερίς,
Συρακοσίῳ δὲ κίττα: Μειδίας δ᾽ ἐκεῖ
ὄρτυξ ἐκαλεῖτο: καὶ γὰρ ᾔκειν ὄρτυγι
ὑπὸ στυφοκόπου τὴν κεφαλὴν πεπληγμένῳ.
ᾗδον δ᾽ ὑπὸ φιλορνιθίας πάντες μέλη,
ὅπου χελιδὼν ἦν τις ἐμπεποιημένη
ἢ πηνέλοψ ἢ χήν τις ἢ περιστερὰ
ἢ πτέρυγες, ἢ πτεροῦ τι καὶ σμικρὸν προσῆν.
τοιαῦτα μὲν τἀκεῖθεν. ἓν δέ σοι λέγω:
ἥξουσ᾽ ἐκεῖθεν δεῦρο πλεῖν ἢ μύριοι
πτερῶν δεόμενοι καὶ τρόπων γαμψωνύχων:
ὥστε πτερῶν σοι τοῖς ἐποίκοις δεῖ ποθέν.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐκ ἆρα μὰ Δί᾽ ἡμῖν ἔτ᾽ ἔργον ἐστάναι.
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα σὺ μὲν ἰὼν τὰς ἀρρίχους
καὶ τοὺς κοφίνους ἅπαντας ἐμπίμπλη πτερῶν:
Μανῆς δὲ φερέτω μοι θύραζε τὰ πτερά:
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐκείνων τοὺς προσιόντας δέξομαι.

Χορός

ταχὺ δὴ πολυάνορα τάνδε πόλιν
καλεῖ τις ἀνθρώπων.

Πισθέταιρος

τύχη μόνον προσείη.

Χορός

κατέχουσι δ᾽ ἔρωτες ἐμᾶς πόλεως.

Πισθέταιρος

θάττον φέρειν κελεύω.

Χορός

τί γὰρ οὐκ ἔνι ταύτῃ
καλὸν ἀνδρὶ μετοικεῖν;
Σοφία Πόθος Ἀμβροσία Χάριτες
τό τε τῆς ἀγανόφρονος Ἡσυχίας
εὐήμερον πρόσωπον.

Πισθέταιρος

ὡς βλακικῶς διακονεῖς: οὐ θᾶττον ἐγκονήσεις;

Χορός

φερέτω κάλαθον ταχύ τις πτερύγων,
σὺ δ᾽ αὖθις ἐξόρμα —

Πισθέταιρος

τύπτων γε τοῦτον ὠδί.

Χορός

πάνυ γὰρ βραδύς ἐστί τις ὥσπερ ὄνος.

Πισθέταιρος

Μανῆς γάρ ἐστι δειλός.

Χορός

σὺ δὲ τὰ πτερὰ πρῶτον
διάθες τάδε κόσμῳ,
τά τε μουσίχ᾽ ὁμοῦ τά τε μαντικὰ καὶ
τὰ θαλάττι᾽. ἔπειτα δ᾽ ὅπως φρονίμως
πρὸς ἄνδρ᾽ ὀρῶν πτερώσεις.

Πισθέταιρος

οὔ τοι μὰ τὰς κερχνῇδας ἔτι σοῦ σχήσομαι,
οὕτως ὀρῶν σε δειλὸν ὄντα καὶ βραδύν.

Πατραλοίας

γενοίμαν αἰετὸς ὑψιπέτας,
ὡς ἀμποταθείην ὑπὲρ ἀτρυγέτου
γλαυκᾶς ἐπ᾽ οἶδμα λίμνας.

Πισθέταιρος

ἔοικεν οὐ ψευδαγγελήσειν ἄγγελος.
ᾄδων γὰρ ὅδε τις αἰετοὺς προσέρχεται.

Πατραλοίας

αἰβοῖ:
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν τοῦ πέτεσθαι γλυκύτερον:
ὀρνιθομανῶ γὰρ καὶ πέτομαι καὶ βούλομαι
οἰκεῖν μεθ᾽ ὑμῶν κἀπιθυμῶ τῶν νόμων.

Πισθέταιρος

ποίων νόμων; πολλοὶ γὰρ ὀρνίθων νόμοι.

Πατραλοίας

πάντων: μάλιστα δ᾽ ὅτι καλὸν νομίζεται
τὸν πατέρα τοῖς ὄρνισιν ἄγχειν καὶ δάκνειν.

Πισθέταιρος

καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ ἀνδρεῖόν γε πάνυ νομιζομεν,
ὃς ἂν πεπλήγῃ τὸν πατέρα νεοττὸς ὤν.

Πατραλοίας

διὰ ταῦτα μέντοι δεῦρ᾽ ἀνοικισθεὶς ἐγὼ
ἄγχειν ἐπιθυμῶ τὸν πατέρα καὶ πάντ᾽ ἔχειν.

Πισθέταιρος

ἀλλ᾽ ἔστιν ἡμῖν τοῖσιν ὄρνισιν νόμος

παλαιὸς ἐν ταῖς τῶν πελαργῶν κύρβεσιν:
ἐπὴν ὁ πατὴρ ὁ πελαργὸς ἐκπετησίμους
πάντας ποιήσῃ τοὺς πελαργιδέας τρέφων,
δεῖ τοὺς νεοττοὺς τὸν πατέρα πάλιν τρέφειν.

Πατραλοίας

ἀπέλαυσά τἄρα νὴ Δί᾽ ἐλθὼν ἐνθαδί,
εἴπερ γέ μοι καὶ τὸν πατέρα βοσκητέον.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐδέν γ᾽. ἐπειδήπερ γὰρ ἦλθες ὦ μέλε
εὔνους, πτερώσω σ᾽ ὥσπερ ὄρνιν ὀρφανόν.
σοὶ δ᾽ ὦ νεανίσκ᾽ οὐ κακῶς ὑποθήσομαι,
ἀλλ᾽ οἷάπερ αὐτὸς ἔμαθον ὅτε παῖς ἦ. σὺ γὰρ
τὸν μὲν πατέρα μὴ τύπτε: ταυτηνδὶ λαβὼν
τὴν πτέρυγα καὶ τουτὶ τὸ πλῆκτρον θἀτέρᾳ,
νομίσας ἀλεκτρυόνος ἔχειν τονδὶ λόφον,
φρούρει στρατεύου μισθοφορῶν σαυτὸν τρέφε,
τὸν πατέρ ἔα ζῆν: ἀλλ᾽ ἐπειδὴ μάχιμος εἶ,
ἐς τἀπὶ Θρᾴκης ἀποπέτου κἀκεῖ μάχου.

Πατραλοίας

νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον εὖ γέ μοι δοκεῖς λέγειν,
καὶ πείσομαί σοι.

Πισθέταιρος
νοῦν ἄρ᾽ ἔξεις νὴ Δία.

Κινησίας

ἀναπέτομαι δὴ πρὸς Ὄλυμπον πτερύγεσσι κούφαις:
πέτομαι δ᾽ ὁδὸν ἄλλοτ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἄλλαν μελέων —

Πισθέταιρος

τουτὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα φορτίου δεῖται πτερῶν.

Κινησίας

ἀφόβῳ φρενὶ σώματί τε νέαν ἐφέπων —

Πισθέταιρος

ἀσπαζόμεσθα φιλύρινον Κινησίαν.
τί δεῦρο πόδα σὺ κυλλὸν ἀνὰ κύκλον κυκλεῖς;

Κινησίας

ὄρνις γενέσθαι βούλομαι λιγύφθογγος ἀηδών.

Πισθέταιρος

παῦσαι μελῳδῶν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅ τι λέγεις εἰπέ μοι.

Κινησίας

ὑπὸ σοῦ πτερωθεὶς βούλομαι μετάρσιος
ἀναπτόμενος ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν καινὰς λαβεῖν
ἀεροδονήτους καὶ νιφοβόλους ἀναβολάς.

Πισθέταιρος

ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν γὰρ ἄν τις ἀναβολὰς λάβοι;

Κινησίας

κρέμαται μὲν οὖν ἐντεῦθεν ἡμῶν ἡ τέχνη.
τῶν διθυράμβων γὰρ τὰ λαμπρὰ γίγνεται
ἀέρια καὶ σκότιά γε καὶ κυαναυγέα
καὶ πτεροδόνητα: σὺ δὲ κλύων εἴσει τάχα.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐ δῆτ᾽ ἔγωγε.

Κινησίας
νὴ τὸν Ἡρακλέα σύ γε.

ἅπαντα γὰρ δίειμί σοι τὸν ἀέρα.

Κινησίας

εἴδωλα πετεινῶν
αἰθεροδρόμων
οἰωνῶν ταναοδείρων —

Πισθέταιρος

ὠόπ.

Κινησίας

τὸν ἁλάδρομον ἁλάμενος
ἅμ᾽ ἀνεμων πνοαῖσι βαίην.

Πισθέταιρος

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἦ ‘γώ σου καταπαύσω τὰς πνοάς.

Κινησίας

τοτὲ μὲν νοτίαν στείχων πρὸς ὁδόν,
τοτὲ δ᾽ αὖ βορέᾳ σῶμα πελάζων
ἀλίμενον αἰθέρος αὔλακα τέμνων.

Κινησίας

χαρίεντά γ᾽ ὦ πρεσβῦτ᾽ ἐσοφίσω καὶ σοφά.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐ γὰρ σὺ χαίρεις πτεροδόνητος γενόμενος;

Κινησίας

ταυτὶ πεποίηκας τὸν κυκλιοδιδάσκαλον,
ὃς ταῖσι φυλαῖς περιμάχητός εἰμ᾽ ἀεί;

Πισθέταιρος

βούλει διδάσκειν καὶ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν οὖν μένων
Λεωτροφίδῃ χορὸν πετομένων ὀρνέων
Κεκροπίδα φυλήν; **Κινησίας**
καταγελᾷς μου, δῆλος εἶ.
ἀλλ᾽ οὖν ἔγωγ᾽ οὐ παύσομαι, τοῦτ᾽ ἴσθ᾽ ὅτι,
πρὶν ἂν πτερωθεὶς διαδράμω τὸν ἀέρα.

Συκοφάντης

ὄρνιθες τίνες οὐδὲν ἔχοντες πτεροποίκιλοι,
τανυσίπτερε ποικίλα χελιδοῖ; **Πισθέταιρος**

τουτὶ τὸ κακὸν οὐ φαῦλον ἐξεγρήγορεν.
ὅδ᾽ αὖ μινυρίζων δεῦρό τις προσέρχεται.

Συκοφάντης

τανυσίπτερε ποικίλα μάλ᾽ αὖθις.

Πισθέταιρος

ἐς θοἰμάτιον τὸ σκόλιον ᾄδειν μοι δοκεῖ,
δεῖσθαι δ᾽ ἔοικεν οὐκ ὀλίγων χελιδόνων.

Συκοφάντης

τίς ὁ πτερῶν δεῦρ᾽ ἐστὶ τοὺς ἀφικνουμένους;

Πισθέταιρος

ὁδὶ πάρεστιν: ἀλλ᾽ ὅτου δεῖ χρὴ λέγειν.

Συκοφάντης

πτερῶν πτερῶν δεῖ: μὴ πύθῃ τὸ δεύτερον.

Πισθέταιρος

μῶν εὐθὺ Πελλήνης πέτεσθαι διανοεῖ;

Συκοφάντης

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ κλητήρ εἰμι νησιωτικὸς
καὶ συκοφάντης —

Πισθέταιρος
ὦ μακάριε τῆς τέχνης.

Συκοφάντης

καὶ πραγματοδίφης. εἶτα δέομαι πτερὰ λαβὼν
κύκλῳ περισοβεῖν τὰς πόλεις καλούμενος.

Πισθέταιρος

ὑπὸ πτερύγων τι προσκαλεῖ σοφώτερον;

Συκοφάντης

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἵν᾽ οἱ λῃσταί τε μὴ λυπῶσί με,
μετὰ τῶν γεράνων τ᾽ ἐκεῖθεν ἀναχωρῶ πάλιν,
ἀνθ᾽ ἕρματος πολλὰς καταπεπωκὼς δίκας.

Πισθέταιρος

τουτὶ γὰρ ἐργάζει σὺ τοὔργον; εἰπέ μοι,
νεανίας ὢν συκοφαντεῖς τοὺς ξένους; **Συκοφάντης**

τί γὰρ πάθω; σκάπτειν γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι.

Πισθέταιρος

ἀλλ᾽ ἔστιν ἕτερα νὴ Δί᾽ ἔργα σώφρονα,
ἀφ᾽ ὧν διαζῆν ἄνδρα χρῆν τοσουτονὶ
ἐκ τοῦ δικαίου μᾶλλον ἢ δικορραφεῖν.

Συκοφάντης

ὦ δαιμόνιε μὴ νουθέτει μ᾽ ἀλλὰ πτέρου.

Πισθέταιρος

νῦν τοι λέγων πτερῶ σε.

Συκοφάντης
καὶ πῶς ἂν λόγοις
ἄνδρα πτερώσειας σύ;

Πισθέταιρος
πάντες τοῖς λόγοις
ἀναπτεροῦνται.

Συκοφάντης
πάντες;

Πισθέταιρος
οὐκ ἀκήκοας,
ὅταν λέγωσιν οἱ πατέρες ἑκάστοτε
τοῖς μειρακίοις ἐν τοῖσι κουρείοις ταδί;
‘δεινῶς γέ μου τὸ μειράκιον Διειτρέφης
λέγων ἀνεπτέρωκεν ὥσθ᾽ ἱππηλατεῖν.’
ὁ δέ τις τὸν αὐτοῦ φησιν ἐπὶ τραγῳδίᾳ
ἀνεπτερῶσθαι καὶ πεποτῆσθαι τὰς φρένας.

Συκοφάντης

λόγοισί τἄρα καὶ πτεροῦνται;

Πισθέταιρος
φήμ᾽ ἐγώ.
ὑπὸ γὰρ λόγων ὁ νοῦς τε μετεωρίζεται
ἐπαίρεταί τ᾽ ἄνθρωπος. οὕτω καί σ᾽ ἐγὼ
ἀναπτερώσας βούλομαι χρηστοῖς λόγοις
τρέψαι πρὸς ἔργον νόμιμον.

Συκοφάντης
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ βούλομαι.

Πισθέταιρος

τί δαὶ ποιήσεις;

Συκοφάντης
τὸ γένος οὐ καταισχυνῶ.
παππῷος ὁ βίος συκοφαντεῖν ἐστί μοι.
ἀλλὰ πτέρου με ταχέσι καὶ κούφοις πτεροῖς
ἱέρακος ἢ κερχνῇδος, ὡς ἂν τοὺς ξένους
καλεσάμενος κᾆτ᾽ ἐγκεκληκὼς ἐνθαδὶ
κατ᾽ αὖ πέτωμαι πάλιν ἐκεῖσε.

Πισθέταιρος
μανθάνω.
ὡδὶ λέγεις: ὅπως ἂν ὠφλήκῃ δίκην
ἐνθάδε πρὶν ἥκειν ὁ ξένος.

Συκοφάντης
πάνυ μανθάνεις.

Πισθέταιρος

κἄπειθ᾽ ὁ μὲν πλεῖ δεῦρο, σὺ δ᾽ ἐκεῖσ᾽ αὖ πέτει
ἁρπασόμενος τὰ χρήματ᾽ αὐτοῦ.

Συκοφάντης
πάντ᾽ ἔχεις.
βέμβικος οὐδὲν διαφέρειν δεῖ.

Πισθέταιρος
μανθάνω
βέμβικα: καὶ μὴν ἔστι μοι νὴ τὸν Δία
κάλλιστα Κορκυραῖα τοιαυτὶ πτερά.

Συκοφάντης

οἴμοι τάλας μάστιγ᾽ ἔχεις.

Πισθέταιρος
πτερὼ μὲν οὖν,

οἶσί σε ποιήσω τήμερον βεμβικιᾶν.

Συκοφάντης

οἴμοι τάλας.

Πισθέταιρος
οὐ πτερυγιεῖς ἐντευθενί;
οὐκ ἀπολιβάξεις ὦ κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολούμενος;
πικρὰν τάχ᾽ ὄψει στρεψοδικοπανουργίαν.
ἀπίωμεν ἡμεῖς ξυλλαβόντες τὰ πτερά.

Χορός

πολλὰ δὴ καὶ καινὰ καὶ θαυμάστ᾽
ἐπεπτόμεσθα καὶ
δεινὰ πράγματ᾽ εἴδομεν.
ἔστι γὰρ δένδρον πεφυκὸς
ἔκτοπόν τι Καρδίας ἀ-
πωτέρω Κλεώνυμος,
χρήσιμον μὲν οὐδέν, ἄλλως
δὲ δειλὸν καὶ μέγα.
τοῦτο τοῦ μὲν ἦρος ἀεὶ
βλαστάνει καὶ συκοφαντεῖ,
τοῦ δὲ χειμῶνος πάλιν τὰς
ἀσπίδας φυλλορροεῖ. **Χορός**

ἔστι δ᾽ αὖ χώρα πρὸς αὐτῷ
τῷ σκότῳ πόρρω τις ἐν
τῇ λύχνων ἐρημίᾳ,
ἔνθα τοῖς ἥρωσιν ἄνθρωποι
ξυναριστῶσι καὶ ξύν-
εισι πλὴν τῆς ἑσπέρας.
τηνικαῦτα δ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ἦν
ἀσφαλὲς ξυντυγχάνειν.
εἰ γὰρ ἐντύχοι τις ἥρῳ
τῶν βροτῶν νύκτωρ Ὀρέστῃ,
γυμνὸς ἦν πληγεὶς ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ
πάντα τἀπιδέξια. **Προμηθεύς**

οἴμοι τάλας, ὁ Ζεὺς ὅπως μή μ᾽ ὄψεται.
ποῦ Πισθέταιρός ἐστ᾽;

Πισθέταιρος
ἔα τουτὶ τί ἦν;
τίς ὁ συγκαλυμμός;

Προμηθεύς
τῶν θεῶν ὁρᾷς τινα
ἐμοῦ κατόπιν ἐνταῦθα;

Πισθέταιρος
μὰ Δί᾽ ἐγὼ μὲν οὔ.
τίς δ᾽ εἶ σύ;

Προμηθεύς
πηνίκ᾽ ἐστὶν ἄρα τῆς ἡμέρας;

Πισθέταιρος

ὀπηνίκα; σμικρόν τι μετὰ μεσημβρίαν.
ἀλλὰ σὺ τίς εἶ;

Προμηθεύς
βουλυτὸς ἢ περαιτέρω;

Πισθέταιρος

οἴμ᾽ ὡς βδελύττομαί σε.

Προμηθεύς
τί γὰρ ὁ Ζεὺς ποιεῖ;
ἀπαιθριάζει τὰς νεφέλας ἢ ξυννέφει; **Πισθέταιρος**

οἴμωζε μεγάλ᾽.

Προμηθεύς
οὕτω μὲν ἐκκεκαλύψομαι.

Πισθέταιρος

ὦ φίλε Προμηθεῦ.

Προμηθεύς
παῦε παῦε, μὴ βόα.

Πισθέταιρος

τί γὰρ ἔστι;

Προμηθεύς
σίγα, μὴ κάλει μου τοὔνομα:
ἀπὸ γάρ μ᾽ ὀλεῖς, εἴ μ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ ὁ Ζεὺς ὄψεται.
ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα φράσω σοι πάντα τἄνω πράγματα,
τουτὶ λαβών μου τὸ σκιάδειον ὑπέρεχε
ἄνωθεν, ὡς ἂν μή μ᾽ ὀρῶσιν οἱ θεοί.

Πισθέταιρος

ἰοὺ ἰού:
εὖ γ᾽ ἐπενόησας αὐτὸ καὶ προμηθικῶς.
ὑπόδυθι ταχὺ δὴ κᾆτα θαρρήσας λέγε.

Προμηθεύς

ἄκουε δή νυν.

Πισθέταιρος
ὡς ἀκούοντος λέγε.

Προμηθεύς

ἀπόλωλεν ὁ Ζεύς.

Πισθέταιρος
πηνίκ᾽ ἄττ᾽ ἀπώλετο;

Προμηθεύς

ἐξ οὗπερ ὑμεῖς ᾠκίσατε τὸν ἀέρα.
θύει γὰρ οὐδεὶς οὐδὲν ἀνθρώπων ἔτι

θεοῖσιν, οὐδὲ κνῖσα μηρίων ἄπο
ἀνῆλθεν ὡς ἡμᾶς ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου,
ἀλλ᾽ ὡσπερεὶ Θεσμοφορίοις νηστεύομεν
ἄνευ θυηλῶν: οἱ δὲ βάρβαροι θεοὶ
πεινῶντες ὥσπερ Ἰλλυριοὶ κεκριγότες
ἐπιστρατεύσειν φάσ᾽ ἄνωθεν τῷ Διί,
εἰ μὴ παρέξει τἀμπόρι᾽ ἀνεῳγμένα,
ἵν᾽ εἰσάγοιτο σπλάγχνα κατατετμημένα.

Πισθέταιρος

εἰσὶν γὰρ ἕτεροι βάρβαροι θεοί τινες
ἄνωθεν ὑμῶν;

Προμηθεύς
οὐ γάρ εἰσι βάρβαροι,
ὅθεν ὁ πατρῷός ἐστιν Ἐξηκεστίδῃ; **Πισθέταιρος**

ὄνομα δὲ τούτοις τοῖς θεοῖς τοῖς βαρβάροις
τί ἔστιν;

Προμηθεύς
ὅ τι ἔστιν; Τριβαλλοί.

Πισθέταιρος
μανθάνω.
ἐντεῦθεν ἆρα τοὐπιτριβείης ἐγένετο; **Προμηθεύς**

μάλιστα πάντων. ἓν δέ σοι λέγω σαφές:
ἥξουσι πρέσβεις δεῦρο περὶ διαλλαγῶν
παρὰ τοῦ Διὸς καὶ τῶν Τριβαλλῶν τῶν ἄνω:
ὑμεῖς δὲ μὴ σπένδεσθ᾽, ἐὰν μὴ παραδιδῷ
τὸ σκῆπτρον ὁ Ζεὺς τοῖσιν ὄρνισιν πάλιν,
καὶ τὴν Βασίλειάν σοι γυναῖκ᾽ ἔχειν διδῷ.

Πισθέταιρος

τίς ἐστιν ἡ Βασίλεια;

Προμηθεύς

καλλίστη κόρη,
ἥπερ ταμιεύει τὸν κεραυνὸν τοῦ Διὸς
καὶ τἄλλ᾽ ἁπαξάπαντα, τὴν εὐβουλίαν
τὴν εὐνομίαν τὴν σωφροσύνην τὰ νεώρια,
τὴν λοιδορίαν τὸν κωλακρέτην τὰ τριώβολα.

Πισθέταιρος

ἅπαντά γ᾽ ἦρ᾽ αὐτῷ ταμιεύει;

Προμηθεύς
φήμ᾽ ἐγώ.
ἤν γ᾽ ἢν σὺ παρ᾽ ἐκείνου παραλάβῃς, πάντ᾽ ἔχεις.
τούτων ἕνεκα δεῦρ᾽ ἦλθον, ἵνα φράσαιμί σοι.
ἀεί ποτ᾽ ἀνθρώποις γὰρ εὔνους εἴμ᾽ ἐγώ.

Πισθέταιρος

μόνον θεῶν γὰρ διὰ σ᾽ ἀπανθρακίζομεν.

Προμηθεύς

μισῶ δ᾽ ἅπαντας τοὺς θεούς, ὡς οἶσθα σύ.

Πισθέταιρος

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἀεὶ δῆτα θεομισὴς ἔφυς.

Προμηθεύς

Τίμων καθαρός. ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἂν ἀποτρέχω πάλιν,
φέρε τὸ σκιάδειον, ἵνα με κἂν ὁ Ζεὺς ἴδῃ
ἄνωθεν, ἀκολουθεῖν δοκῶ κανηφόρῳ.

Πισθέταιρος

καὶ τὸν δίφρον γε διφροφόρει τονδὶ λαβών.

Χορός

πρὸς δὲ τοῖς Σκιάποσιν λίμνη
τις ἔστ᾽ ἄλουτος οὗ
ψυχαγωγεῖ Σωκράτης:
ἔνθα καὶ Πείσανδρος ἦλθε
δεόμενος ψυχὴν ἰδεῖν ἣ
ζῶντ᾽ ἐκεῖνον προὔλιπε,
σφάγι᾽ ἔχων κάμηλον ἀμνόν
τιν᾽, ἧς λαιμοὺς τεμὼν ὥσπερ
ποθ᾽ οὐδυσσεὺς ἀπῆλθε,
κᾆτ᾽ ἀνῆλθ᾽ αὐτῷ κάτωθεν
πρὸς τὸ λαῖτμα τῆς καμήλου
Χαιρεφῶν ἡ νυκτερίς. **Ποσειδῶν**

τὸ μὲν πόλισμα τῆς Νεφελοκοκκυγίας
ὁρᾶν τοδὶ πάρεστιν, οἳ πρεσβεύομεν.
οὗτος τί δρᾷς; ἐπ᾽ ἀριστέρ᾽ οὕτως ἀμπέχει;
οὐ μεταβαλεῖς θοἰμάτιον ὦδ᾽ ἐπιδέξια;
τί ὦ κακόδαιμον; Λαισποδίας εἶ τὴν φύσιν;
ὦ δημοκρατία ποῖ προβιβᾷς ἡμᾶς ποτε,
εἰ τουτονί γ᾽ ἐχειροτόνησαν οἱ θεοί; **Τριβαλλός**

ἔξεις ἀτρέμας;

Ποσειδῶν
οἴμωζε: πολὺ γὰρ δή σ᾽ ἐγὼ
ἑόρακα πάντων βαρβαρώτατον θεῶν.
ἄγε δὴ τί δρῶμεν Ἡράκλεις; **Ἡρακλῆς**
ἀκήκοας
ἐμοῦ γ᾽ ὅτι τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἄγχειν βούλομαι,
ὅστις ποτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὁ τοὺς θεοὺς ἀποτειχίσας.

Ποσειδῶν

ἀλλ᾽ ὦγάθ᾽ ἠρήμεσθα περὶ διαλλαγῶν
πρέσβεις.

Ἡρακλῆς
διπλασίως μᾶλλον ἄγχειν μοι δοκεῖ.

Πισθέταιρος

τὴν τυρόκνηστίν τις δότω: φέρε σίλφιον:
τυρὸν φερέτω τις: πυρπόλει τοὺς ἄνθρακας.

Ποσειδῶν

τὸν ἄνδρα χαίρειν οἱ θεοὶ κελεύομεν
τρεῖς ὄντες ἡμεῖς.

Πισθέταιρος
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπικνῶ τὸ σίλφιον.

Ἡρακλῆς

τὰ δὲ κρέα τοῦ ταῦτ᾽ ἐστίν;

Πισθέταιρος
ὄρνιθές τινες
ἐπανιστάμενοι τοῖς δημοτικοῖσιν ὀρνέοις
ἔδοξαν ἀδικεῖν.

Ἡρακλῆς
εἶτα δῆτα σίλφιον
εἴπικνῆς πρότερον αὐτοῖσιν; **Πισθέταιρος**
ὦ χαῖρ᾽ Ἡράκλεις.
τί ἔστι;

Ποσειδῶν
πρεσβεύοντες ἡμεῖς ἥκομεν
παρὰ τῶν θεῶν περὶ πολέμου καταλλαγῆς.

Πισθέταιρος

ἔλαιον οὐκ ἔνεστιν ἐν τῇ ληκύθῳ.

Ἡρακλῆς

καὶ μὴν τά γ᾽ ὀρνίθεια λιπάρ᾽ εἶναι πρέπει.

Ποσειδῶν

ἡμεῖς τε γὰρ πολεμοῦντες οὐ κερδαίνομεν,
ὑμεῖς τ᾽ ἂν ἡμῖν τοῖς θεοῖς ὄντες φίλοι
ὄμβριον ὕδωρ ἂν εἴχετ᾽ ἐν τοῖς τέλμασιν,
ἀλκυονίδας τ᾽ ἂν ἤγεθ᾽ ἡμέρας ἀεί.
τούτων περὶ πάντων αὐτοκράτορες ἥκομεν.

Πισθέταιρος

ἀλλ᾽ οὔτε πρότερον πώποθ᾽ ἡμεῖς ἤρξαμεν
πολέμου πρὸς ὑμᾶς, νῦν τ᾽ ἐθέλομεν, εἰ δοκεῖ,
ἐάν τι δίκαιον ἀλλὰ νῦν ἐθέλητε δρᾶν,
σπονδὰς ποιεῖσθαι. τὰ δὲ δίκαι᾽ ἐστὶν ταδί,
τὸ σκῆπτρον ἡμῖν τοῖσιν ὄρνισιν πάλιν
τὸν Δί᾽ ἀποδοῦναι: κἂν διαλλαττώμεθα
ἐπὶ τοῖσδε, τοὺς πρέσβεις ἐπ᾽ ἄριστον καλῶ.

Ἡρακλῆς

ἐμοὶ μὲν ἀπόχρη ταῦτα καὶ ψηφίζομαι.

Ποσειδῶν

τί ὦ κακόδαιμον; ἠλίθιος καὶ γάστρις εἶ.
ἀποστερεῖς τὸν πατέρα τῆς τυραννίδος; **Πισθέταιρος**

ἄληθες; οὐ γὰρ μεῖζον ὑμεῖς οἱ θεοὶ
ἰσχύσετ᾽, ἢν ὄρνιθες ἄρξωσιν κάτω;
νῦν μέν γ᾽ ὑπὸ ταῖς νεφέλαισιν ἐγκεκρυμμένοι
κύψαντες ἐπιορκοῦσιν ὑμᾶς οἱ βροτοί:
ἐὰν δὲ τοὺς ὄρνις ἔχητε συμμάχους,
ὅταν ὀμνύῃ τις τὸν κόρακα καὶ τὸν Δία,
ὁ κόραξ παρελθὼν τοὐπιορκοῦντος λάθρᾳ
προσπτόμενος ἐκκόψει τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν θενών.

Ποσειδῶν

νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ ταῦτά γέ τοι καλῶς λέγεις.

Ἡρακλῆς

κἀμοὶ δοκεῖ.

Πισθέταιρος
τί δαὶ σὺ φῄς;

Τριβαλλός
ναβαισατρεῦ.

Πισθέταιρος

ὁρᾷς; ἐπαινεῖ χοὗτος. ἕτερόν νυν ἔτι
ἀκούσαθ᾽ ὅσον ὑμᾶς ἀγαθὸν ποιήσομεν.
ἐάν τις ἀνθρώπων ἱερεῖόν τῳ θεῶν
εὐξάμενος εἶτα διασοφίζηται λέγων,
‘μενετοὶ θεοί,’ καὶ μἀποδιδῷ μισητίᾳ,
ἀναπράξομεν καὶ ταῦτα.

Ποσειδῶν
φέρ᾽ ἴδω τῷ τρόπῳ; **Πισθέταιρος**

ὅταν διαριθμῶν ἀργυρίδιον τύχῃ
ἄνθρωπος οὗτος, ἢ καθῆται λούμενος,
καταπτόμενος ἰκτῖνος ἁρπάσας λάθρᾳ
προβάτοιν δυοῖν τιμὴν ἀνοίσει τῷ θεῷ.

Ἡρακλῆς

τὸ σκῆπτρον ἀποδοῦναι πάλιν ψηφίζομαι
τούτοις ἐγώ.

Ποσειδῶν
καὶ τὸν Τριβαλλόν νυν ἐροῦ.

Ἡρακλῆς

ὁ Τριβαλλός, οἰμώζειν δοκεῖ σοι;

Τριβαλλός

σαυνάκα
βακταρικροῦσα.

Ἡρακλῆς
φησί μ᾽ εὖ λέγειν πάνυ.

Ποσειδῶν

εἴ τοι δοκεῖ σφῷν ταῦτα, κἀμοὶ συνδοκεῖ.

Ἡρακλῆς

οὗτος, δοκεῖ δρᾶν ταῦτα τοῦ σκήπτρου πέρι.

Πισθέταιρος

καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ ἕτερόν γ᾽ ἐστὶν οὗ ‘μνήσθην ἐγώ.
τὴν μὲν γὰρ Ἥραν παραδίδωμι τῷ Διί,
τὴν δὲ Βασίλειαν τὴν κόρην γυναῖκ᾽ ἐμοὶ
ἐκδοτέον ἐστίν.

Ποσειδῶν
οὐ διαλλαγῶν ἐρᾷς.
ἀπίωμεν οἴκαδ᾽ αὖθις.

Πισθέταιρος
ὀλίγον μοι μέλει.
μάγειρε τὸ κατάχυσμα χρὴ ποιεῖν γλυκύ.

Ἡρακλῆς

ὦ δαιμόνι᾽ ἀνθρώπων Πόσειδον ποῖ φέρει;
ἡμεῖς περὶ γυναικὸς μιᾶς πολεμήσομεν;

Ποσειδῶν

τί δαὶ ποιῶμεν;

Ἡρακλῆς
ὅ τι; διαλλαττώμεθα.

Ποσειδῶν

τί δ᾽ ᾠζύρ᾽; οὐκ οἶσθ᾽ ἐξαπατώμενος πάλαι;
βλάπτεις δέ τοι σὺ σαυτόν. ἢν γὰρ ἀποθάνῃ
ὁ Ζεὺς παραδοὺς τούτοισι τὴν τυραννίδα,
πένης ἔσει σύ. σοῦ γὰρ ἅπαντα γίγνεται
τὰ χρήμαθ᾽, ὅσ᾽ ἂν ὁ Ζεὺς ἀποθνῄσκων καταλίπῃ.

Πισθέταιρος

οἴμοι τάλας οἷόν σε περισοφίζεται.
δεῦρ᾽ ὡς ἔμ᾽ ἀποχώρησον, ἵνα τί σοι φράσω.
διαβάλλεταί σ᾽ ὁ θεῖος ὦ πόνηρε σύ.
τῶν γὰρ πατρῴων οὐδ᾽ ἀκαρῆ μέτεστί σοι
κατὰ τοὺς νόμους: νόθος γὰρ εἶ κοὐ γνήσιος.

Ἡρακλῆς

ἐγὼ νόθος; τί λέγεις;

Πισθέταιρος
σὺ μέντοι νὴ Δία
ὧν γε ξένης γυναικός. ἢ πῶς ἄν ποτε
ἐπίκληρον εἶναι τὴν Ἀθηναίαν δοκεῖς,
οὖσαν θυγατέρ᾽, ὄντων ἀδελφῶν γυησίων; **Ἡρακλῆς**

τί δ᾽ ἦν ὁ πατὴρ ἐμοὶ διδῷ τὰ χρήματα
νοθεῖ ἀποθνῄσκων;

Πισθέταιρος
ὁ νόμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐᾷ.
οὗτος ὁ Ποσειδῶν πρῶτος, ὃς ἐπαίρει σε νῦν,
ἀνθέξεταί σου τῶν πατρῴων χρημάτων
φάσκων ἀδελφὸς αὐτὸς εἶναι γνήσιος.
ἐρῶ δὲ δὴ καὶ τὸν Σόλωνός σοι νόμον:
‘νόθῳ δὲ μὴ εἶναι ἀγχιστείαν παίδων ὄντων
γνησίων. ἐὰν δὲ παῖδες μὴ ὦσι γνήσιοι, τοῖς
ἐγγυτάτω γένους μετεῖναι τῶν χρημάτων.’

Ἡρακλῆς

ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ οὐδὲν τῶν πατρῴων χρημάτων
μέτεστιν;

Πισθέταιρος
οὐ μέντοι μὰ Δία. λέξον δέ μοι,
ἤδη σ᾽ ὁ πατὴρ εἰσήγαγ᾽ ἐς τοὺς φράτερας; **Ἡρακλῆς**

οὐ δῆτ᾽ ἐμέ γε. καὶ δῆτ᾽ ἐθαύμαζον πάλαι.

Πισθέταιρος

τί δῆτ᾽ ἄνω κέχηνας αἴκειαν βλέπων;
ἀλλ᾽ ἢν μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν ᾖς, καταστήσας σ᾽ ἐγὼ
τύραννον ὀρνίθων παρέξω σοι γάλα.

Ἡρακλῆς

δίκαι᾽ ἔμοιγε καὶ πάλαι δοκεῖς λέγειν
περὶ τῆς κόρης, κἄγωγε παραδίδωμί σοι.

Πισθέταιρος

τί δαὶ σὺ φῄς;

Ποσειδῶν
τἀναντία ψηφίζομαι.

Πισθέταιρος

ἐν τῷ Τριβαλλῷ πᾶν τὸ πρᾶγμα. τί σὺ λέγεις;

Τριβαλλός

καλάνι κόραυνα καὶ μεγάλα βασιλιναῦ
ὄρνιτο παραδίδωμι.

Ἡρακλῆς
παραδοῦναι λέγει.

Ποσειδῶν

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐχ οὗτός γε παραδοῦναι λέγει,
εἰ μὴ † βαδίζειν † ὥἅσπερ αἱ χελιδόσιν λέγει.

Πισθέταιρος

οὐκοῦν παραδοῦναι ταῖς χελιδόσιν λέγει.

Ποσειδῶν

σφὼ νῦν διαλλάττεσθε καὶ ξυμβαίνετε:
ἐγὼ δ᾽, ἐπειδὴ σφῷν δοκεῖ, σιγήσομαι.

Ἡρακλῆς

ἡμῖν ἃ λέγεις σὺ πάντα συγχωρεῖν δοκεῖ.
ἀλλ᾽ ἴθι μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἐς τὸν οὐρανόν,
ἵνα τὴν Βασίλειαν καὶ τὰ πάντ᾽ ἐκεῖ λάβῃς.

Πισθέταιρος

ἐς καιρὸν ἆρα κατεκόπησαν οὐτοιὶ
ἐς τοὺς γάμους.

Ἡρακλῆς
βούλεσθε δῆτ᾽ ἐγὼ τέως
ὀπτῶ τὰ κρέα ταυτὶ μένων; ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ἴτε.

Ποσειδῶν

ὀπτᾷς τὰ κρέα; πολλήν γε τενθείαν λέγεις.
οὐκ εἶ μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν;

Ἡρακλῆς
εὖ γε μέντἂν διετέθην.

Πισθέταιρος

ἀλλὰ γαμικὴν χλανίδα δότω τις δεῦρό μοι.

Χορός

ἔστι δ᾽ ἐν Φαναῖσι πρὸς τῇ
Κλεψύδρᾳ πανοῦργον ἐγ-
γλωττογαστόρων γένος,
οἳ θερίζουσίν τε καὶ σπείρουσι
καὶ τρυγῶσι ταῖς γλώτταισι
συκάζουσί τε:
βάρβαροι δ᾽ εἰσὶν γένος,
Γοργίαι τε καὶ Φίλιπποι.
κἀπὸ τῶν ἐγγλωττογαστόρων
ἐκείνων τῶν Φιλίππων
πανταχοῦ τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἡ
γλῶττα χωρὶς τέμνεται. **Ἄγγελος**

ὦ πάντ᾽ ἀγαθὰ πράττοντες, ὦ μείζω λόγου,
ὦ τρισμακάριον πτηνὸν ὀρνίθων γένος,
δέχεσθε τὸν τύραννον ὀλβίοις δόμοις.
προσέρχεται γὰρ οἷς οὔτε παμφαὴς
ἀστὴρ ἰδεῖν ἔλαμψε χρυσαυγεῖ δόμῳ,
οὔθ᾽ ἡλίου τηλαυγὲς ἀκτίνων σέλας
τοιοῦτον ἐξέλαμψεν, οἷον ἔρχεται
ἔχων γυναικὸς κάλλος οὐ φατὸν λέγειν,
πάλλων κεραυνόν, πτεροφόρον Διὸς βέλος:
ὀσμὴ δ᾽ ἀνωνόμαστος ἐς βάθος κύκλου
χωρεῖ, καλὸν θέαμα: θυμιαμάτων δ᾽
αὖραι διαψαίρουσι πλεκτάνην καπνοῦ.
ὁδὶ δὲ καὐτός ἐστιν. ἀλλὰ χρὴ θεᾶς
Μούσης ἀνοίγειν ἱερὸν εὔφημον στόμα. **Χορός**

ἄναγε δίεχε πάραγε πάρεχε.
περιπέτεσθε
τὸν μάκαρα μάκαρι σὺν τύχᾳ.
ὦ φεῦ φεῦ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ κάλλους.
ὦ μακαριστὸν σὺ γάμον τῇδε πόλει γημας.

Χορός

μεγάλαι μεγάλαι κατέχουσι τύχαι
γένος ὀρνίθων
διὰ τόνδε τὸν ἄνδρ᾽. ἀλλ᾽ ὑμεναίοις

καὶ νυμφιδίοισι δέχεσθ᾽ ᾠδαῖς
αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν Βασίλειαν.

Χορός

Ἥρᾳ ποτ᾽ Ὀλυμπίᾳ
τῶν ἠλιβάτων θρόνων
ἄρχοντα θεοῖς μέγαν
Μοῖραι ξυνεκοίμισαν
ἐν τοιῷδ᾽ ὑμεναίῳ.
Ὑμὴν ὦ Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ,
Ὑμὴν ὦ Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ. **Χορός**

ὁ δ᾽ ἀμφιθαλὴς Ἔρως
χρυσόπτερος ἡνίας
ἠΰθυνε παλιντόνους,
Ζηνὸς πάροχος γάμων
τῆς τ᾽ εὐδαίμονος Ἥρας.
Ὑμὴν ὦ Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ,
Ὑμὴν ὦ Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ. **Πισθέταιρος**

ἐχάρην ὕμνοις, ἐχάρην ᾠδαῖς:
ἄγαμαι δὲ λόγων. ἄγε νυν αὐτοῦ
καὶ τὰς χθονίας κλῄσατε βροντὰς
τάς τε πυρώδεις Διὸς ἀστεροπὰς
δεινόν τ᾽ ἀργῆτα κεραυνόν.

Χορός

ὦ μέγα χρύσεον ἀστεροπῆς φάος,
ὦ Διὸς ἄμβροτον ἔγχος πυρφόρον,
ὦ χθόνιαι βαρυαχέες
ὀμβροφόροι θ᾽ ἅμα βρονταί,
αἷς ὅδε νῦν χθόνα σείει.
διὰ σὲ τὰ πάντα κρατήσας
καὶ πάρεδρον Βασίλειαν ἔχει Διός.
Ὑμὴν ὦ Ὑμέναι᾽ ὦ.

Πισθέταιρος

ἔπεσθε νῦν γάμοισιν ὦ
φῦλα πάντα συννόμων
πτεροφόρ᾽ ἐπὶ δάπεδον Διὸς
καὶ λέχος γαμήλιον.
ὄρεξον ὦ μάκαιρα σὴν
χεῖρα καὶ πτερῶν ἐμῶν
λαβοῦσα συγχόρευσον: αἴρων
δὲ κουφιῶ σ᾽ ἐγώ.

Χορός

ἀλαλαλαὶ ἰὴ παιών,
τήνελλα καλλίνικος, ὦ
δαιμόνων ὑπέρτατε.

LYSISTRATA

Λυσιστράτη

ἀλλ᾽ εἴ τις ἐς Βακχεῖον αὐτὰς ἐκάλεσεν,
ἢ ‘ς Πανὸς ἢ ‘πὶ Κωλιάδ᾽ ἢ ‘ς Γενετυλλίδος,
οὐδ᾽ ἂν διελθεῖν ἦν ἂν ὑπὸ τῶν τυμπάνων.
νῦν δ᾽ οὐδεμία πάρεστιν ἐνταυθοῖ γυνή:
πλὴν ἥ γ᾽ ἐμὴ κωμῆτις ἥδ᾽ ἐξέρχεται.
χαῖρ᾽ ὦ Καλονίκη.

Καλονίκη
καὶ σύ γ᾽ ὦ Λυσιστράτη.
τί συντετάραξαι; μὴ σκυθρώπαζ᾽ ὦ τέκνον.
οὐ γὰρ πρέπει σοι τοξοποιεῖν τὰς ὀφρῦς.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ Καλονίκη κάομαι τὴν καρδίαν,
καὶ πόλλ᾽ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῶν γυναικῶν ἄχθομαι,
ὁτιὴ παρὰ μὲν τοῖς ἀνδράσιν νενομίσμεθα
εἶναι πανοῦργοι —

Καλονίκη
καὶ γάρ ἐσμεν νὴ Δία.

Λυσιστράτη

εἰρημένον δ᾽ αὐταῖς ἁπαντᾶν ἐνθάδε
βουλευσομέναισιν οὐ περὶ φαύλου πράγματος,
εὕδουσι κοὐχ ἥκουσιν.

Καλονίκη
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ φιλτάτη
ἥξουσι: χαλεπή τοι γυναικῶν ἔξοδος.
ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἡμῶν περὶ τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἐκύπτασεν,
ἡ δ᾽ οἰκέτην ἤγειρεν, ἡ δὲ παιδίον
κατέκλινεν, ἡ δ᾽ ἔλουσεν, ἡ δ᾽ ἐψώμισεν.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερά τἄρ᾽ ἦν τῶνδε προὐργιαίτερα
αὐταῖς.

Καλονίκη
τί δ᾽ ἐστὶν ὦ φίλη Λυσιστράτη,
ἐφ᾽ ὅ τι ποθ᾽ ἡμᾶς τὰς γυναῖκας συγκαλεῖς;
τί τὸ πρᾶγμα; πηλίκον τι;

Λυσιστράτη
μέγα.

Καλονίκη
μῶν καὶ παχύ;

Λυσιστράτη

καὶ νὴ Δία παχύ.

Καλονίκη
κᾆτα πῶς οὐχ ἥκομεν;

Λυσιστράτη

οὐχ οὗτος ὁ τρόπος: ταχὺ γὰρ ἂν ξυνήλθομεν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἔστιν ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ πρᾶγμ᾽ ἀνεζητημένον
πολλαῖσί τ᾽ ἀγρυπνίαισιν ἐρριπτασμένον.

Καλονίκη

ἦ πού τι λεπτόν ἐστι τοὐρριπτασμένον.

Λυσιστράτη

οὕτω γε λεπτὸν ὥσθ᾽ ὅλης τῆς Ἑλλάδος
ἐν ταῖς γυναιξίν ἐστιν ἡ σωτηρία.

Καλονίκη

ἐν ταῖς γυναιξίν; ἐπ᾽ ὀλίγου γ᾽ ὠχεῖτ᾽ ἄρα.

Λυσιστράτη

ὡς ἔστ᾽ ἐν ἡμῖν τῆς πόλεως τὰ πράγματα,
ἢ μηκέτ᾽ εἶναι μήτε Πελοποννησίους —

Καλονίκη

βέλτιστα τοίνυν μηκέτ᾽ εἶναι νὴ Δία.

Λυσιστράτη

Βοιωτίους τε πάντας ἐξολωλέναι.

Καλονίκη

μὴ δῆτα πάντας γ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἄφελε τὰς ἐγχέλεις.

Λυσιστράτη

περὶ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν δ᾽ οὐκ ἐπιγλωττήσομαι
τοιοῦτον οὐδέν: ἀλλ᾽ ὑπονόησον σύ μοι.
ἦν δὲ ξυνέλθωσ᾽ αἱ γυναῖκες ἐνθάδε
αἵ τ᾽ ἐκ Βοιωτῶν αἵ τε Πελοποννησίων
ἡμεῖς τε, κοινῇ σώσομεν τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

Καλονίκη

τί δ᾽ ἂν γυναῖκες φρόνιμον ἐργασαίατο
ἢ λαμπρόν, αἳ καθήμεθ᾽ ἐξηνθισμέναι,
κροκωτοφοροῦσαι καὶ κεκαλλωπισμέναι
καὶ Κιμμερίκ᾽ ὀρθοστάδια καὶ περιβαρίδας;

Λυσιστράτη

ταῦτ᾽ αὐτὰ γάρ τοι κἄσθ᾽ ἃ σώσειν προσδοκῶ,
τὰ κροκωτίδια καὶ τὰ μύρα χαὶ περιβαρίδες
χἤγχουσα καὶ τὰ διαφανῆ χιτώνια.

Καλονίκη

τίνα δὴ τρόπον ποθ᾽;

Λυσιστράτη
ὥστε τῶν νῦν μηδένα
ἀνδρῶν ἐπ᾽ ἀλλήλοισιν ἄρεσθαι δόρυ —

Καλονίκη

κροκωτὸν ἄρα νὴ τὼ θεὼ ‘γὼ βάψομαι.

Λυσιστράτη

μηδ᾽ ἀσπίδα λαβεῖν —

Καλονίκη
Κιμμερικὸν ἐνδύσομαι.

Λυσιστράτη

μηδὲ ξιφίδιον.

Καλονίκη
κτήσομαι περιβαρίδας.

Λυσιστράτη

ἆρ᾽ οὐ παρεῖναι τὰς γυναῖκας δῆτ᾽ ἐχρῆν;

Καλονίκη

οὐ γὰρ μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ πετομένας ἥκειν πάλαι.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ μέλ᾽ ὄψει τοι σφόδρ᾽ αὐτὰς Ἀττικάς,
ἅπαντα δρώσας τοῦ δέοντος ὕστερον.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ Παράλων οὐδεμία γυνὴ πάρα,
οὐδ᾽ ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος.

Καλονίκη
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖναί γ᾽ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι
ἐπὶ τῶν κελήτων διαβεβήκασ᾽ ὄρθριαι.

Λυσιστράτη

οὐδ᾽ ἃς προσεδόκων κἀλογιζόμην ἐγὼ
πρώτας παρέσεσθαι δεῦρο τὰς Ἀχαρνέων
γυναῖκας, οὐχ ἥκουσιν.

Καλονίκη
ἡ γοῦν Θεογένους
ὡς δεῦρ᾽ ἰοῦσα θοὐκάταιον ἤρετο.
ἀτὰρ αἵδε καὶ δή σοι προσέρχονταί τινες.

Λυσιστράτη

αἰδί θ᾽ ἕτεραι χωροῦσί τινες.

Καλονίκη
ἰοὺ ἰού,
πόθεν εἰσίν;

Λυσιστράτη
Ἀναγυρουντόθεν.

Καλονίκη
νὴ τὸν Δία:
ὁ γοῦν ἀνάγυρός μοι κεκινῆσθαι δοκεῖ.

Μυρρίνη

μῶν ὕστεραι πάρεσμεν ὦ Λυσιστράτη;
τί φῄς; τί σιγᾷς;

Λυσιστράτη
οὔ σ᾽ ἐπαινῶ Μυρρίνη
ἥκουσαν ἄρτι περὶ τοιούτου πράγματος.

Μυρρίνη

μόλις γὰρ ηὗρον ἐν σκότῳ τὸ ζώνιον.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴ τι πάνυ δεῖ, ταῖς παρούσαισιν λέγε.

Λυσιστράτη

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἐπαναμείνωμεν ὀλίγου γ᾽ οὕνεκα
τάς τ᾽ ἐκ Βοιωτῶν τάς τε Πελοποννησίων
γυναῖκας ἐλθεῖν.

Μυρρίνη
πολὺ σὺ κάλλιον λέγεις.
ἡδὶ δὲ καὶ δὴ Λαμπιτὼ προσέρχεται.

Λυσιστράτη

ὦ φιλτάτη Λάκαινα χαῖρε Λαμπιτοῖ.
οἷον τὸ κάλλος γλυκυτάτη σου φαίνεται.
ὡς δ᾽ εὐχροεῖς, ὡς δὲ σφριγᾷ τὸ σῶμά σου.
κἂν ταῦρον ἄγχοις.

Λαμπιτώ
μάλα γ᾽ οἰῶ ναὶ τὼ σιώ:
γυμνάδδομαι γὰρ καὶ ποτὶ πυγὰν ἅλλομαι.

Καλονίκη

ὡς δὴ καλὸν τὸ χρῆμα τιτθίων ἔχεις.

Λαμπιτώ

ᾗπερ ἱερεῖόν τοί μ᾽ ὑποψαλάσσετε.

Λυσιστράτη

ἡδὶ δὲ ποδαπή ‘σθ᾽ ἡ νεᾶνις ἠτέρα;

Λαμπιτώ

πρέσβειρά τοι ναὶ τὼ σιὼ Βοιωτία
ἵκει ποθ᾽ ὑμέ.

Μυρρίνη
νὴ μὰ Δία Βοιωτία,
καλόν γ᾽ ἔχουσα τὸ πεδίον.

Καλονίκη
καὶ νὴ Δία
κομψότατα τὴν βληχώ γε παρατετιλμένη.

Λυσιστράτη

τίς δ᾽ ἠτέρα παῖς;

Λαμπιτώ
χαΐα ναὶ τὼ σιώ,
Κορινθία δ᾽ αὖ.

Καλονίκη
χαΐα νὴ τὸν Δία
δήλη ‘στὶν οὖσα ταυταγὶ τἀντευθενί.

Λαμπιτώ

τίς δ᾽ αὖ ξυναλίαξε τόνδε τὸν στόλον
τὸν τᾶν γυναικῶν;

Λυσιστράτη
ἥδ᾽ ἐγώ.

Λαμπιτώ
μύσιδδέ τοι
ὅ τι λῇς ποθ᾽ ἁμέ.

Καλονίκη
νὴ Δί᾽ ὦ φίλη γύναι,
λέγε δῆτα τὸ σπουδαῖον ὅ τι τοῦτ᾽ ἐστί σοι.

Λυσιστράτη

λέγοιμ᾽ ἂν ἤδη. πρὶν λέγειν δ᾽, ὑμᾶς τοδὶ
ἐπερήσομαί τι μικρόν.

Καλονίκη
ὅ τι βούλει γε σύ.

Λυσιστράτη

τοὺς πατέρας οὐ ποθεῖτε τοὺς τῶν παιδίων
ἐπὶ στρατιᾶς ἀπόντας; εὖ γὰρ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι
πάσαισιν ὑμῖν ἐστιν ἀποδημῶν ἀνήρ.

Καλονίκη

ὁ γοῦν ἐμὸς ἀνὴρ πέντε μῆνας ᾧ τάλαν
ἄπεστιν ἐπὶ Θρᾴκης φυλάττων Εὐκράτη.

Μυρρίνη

ὁ δ᾽ ἐμός γε τελέους ἑπτὰ μῆνας ἐν Πύλῳ.

Λαμπιτώ

ὁ δ᾽ ἐμός γα καΐ κ᾽ ἐκ τᾶς ταγᾶς ἔλσῃ ποκά,
πορπακισάμενος φροῦδος ἀμπτάμενος ἔβα.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ μοιχοῦ καταλέλειπται φεψάλυξ.
ἐξ οὗ γὰρ ἡμᾶς προὔδοσαν Μιλήσιοι,
οὐκ εἶδον οὐδ᾽ ὅλισβον ὀκτωδάκτυλον,
ὃς ἦν ἂν ἡμῖν σκυτίνη ‘πικουρία.
ἐθέλοιτ᾽ ἂν οὖν, εἰ μηχανὴν εὕροιμ᾽ ἐγώ,
μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ καταλῦσαι τὸν πόλεμον;

Καλονίκη
νὴ τὼ θεώ:
ἔγωγ᾽ ἂν οὖν κἂν εἴ με χρείη τοὔγκυκλον
τουτὶ καταθεῖσαν ἐκπιεῖν αὐθημερόν.

Μυρρίνη

ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ ἂν κἂν ὡσπερεὶ ψῆτταν δοκῶ

δοῦναι ἂν ἐμαυτῆς παρατεμοῦσα θἄμισυ.

Λαμπιτώ

ἐγὼ δὲ καί κα ποττὸ Ταΰγετόν γ᾽ ἄνω
ἔλσοιμ᾽ ὅπᾳ μέλλοιμί γ᾽ εἰράναν ἰδεῖν.

Λυσιστράτη

λέγοιμ᾽ ἄν: οὐ δεῖ γὰρ κεκρύφθαι τὸν λόγον.
ἡμῖν γὰρ ὦ γυναῖκες, εἴπερ μέλλομεν
ἀναγκάσειν τοὺς ἄνδρας εἰρήνην ἄγειν,
ἀφεκτέ᾽ ἐστὶ —

Καλονίκη
τοῦ; φράσον.

Λυσιστράτη
ποιήσετ᾽ οὖν;

Καλονίκη

ποιήσομεν, κἂν ἀποθανεῖν ἡμᾶς δέῃ.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀφεκτέα τοίνυν ἐστὶν ἡμῖν τοῦ πέους.
τί μοι μεταστρέφεσθε; ποῖ βαδίζετε;
αὖται τί μοιμυᾶτε κἀνανεύετε;
τί χρὼς τέτραπται; τί δάκρυον κατείβεται;
ποιήσετ᾽ ἢ οὐ ποιήσετ᾽; ἢ τί μέλλετε;

Καλονίκη

οὐκ ἂν ποιήσαιμ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ πόλεμος ἑρπέτω.

Μυρρίνη

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἐγὼ γάρ, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ πόλεμος ἑρπέτω.

Λυσιστράτη

ταυτὶ σὺ λέγεις ὦ ψῆττα; καὶ μὴν ἄρτι γε
ἔφησθα σαυτῆς κἂν παρατεμεῖν θἤμισυ.

Καλονίκη

ἄλλ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ὅ τι βούλει: κἄν με χρῇ διὰ τοῦ πυρὸς
ἐθέλω βαδίζειν: τοῦτο μᾶλλον τοῦ πέους.
οὐδὲν γὰρ οἷον ὦ φίλη Λυσιστράτη.

Λυσιστράτη

τί δαὶ σύ;

Ἄλλη
κἀγὼ βούλομαι διὰ τοῦ πυρός.

Λυσιστράτη

ὦ παγκατάπυγον θἠμέτερον ἅπαν γένος,
οὐκ ἐτὸς ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν εἰσιν αἱ τραγῳδίαι.
οὐδὲν γάρ ἐσμεν πλὴν Ποσειδῶν καὶ σκάφη.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ φίλη Λάκαινα, σὺ γὰρ ἐὰν γένῃ
μόνη μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ, τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ἀνασωσαίμεσθ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἄν,
ξυμψήφισαί μοι.

Λαμπιτώ
χαλεπὰ μὲν ναὶ τὼ σιὼ
γυναῖκάς ἐσθ᾽ ὑπνῶν ἄνευ ψωλᾶς μόνας.
ὅμως γα μάν: δεῖ τᾶς γὰρ εἰράνας μάλ᾽ αὖ.

Λυσιστράτη

ὦ φιλτάτη σὺ καὶ μόνη τούτων γυνή.

Καλονίκη

εἰ δ᾽ ὡς μάλιστ᾽ ἀπεχοίμεθ᾽ οὗ σὺ δὴ λέγεις,
ὃ μὴ γένοιτο, μᾶλλον ἂν διὰ τουτογὶ

γένοιτ᾽ ἂν εἰρήνη;

Λυσιστράτη
πολύ γε νὴ τὼ θεώ.
εἰ γὰρ καθοίμεθ᾽ ἔνδον ἐντετριμμέναι,
κἀν τοῖς χιτωνίοισι τοῖς Ἀμοργίνοις
γυμναὶ παρίοιμεν δέλτα παρατετιλμέναι,
στύοιντο δ᾽ ἄνδρες κἀπιθυμοῖεν σπλεκοῦν,
ἡμεῖς δὲ μὴ προσίοιμεν ἀλλ᾽ ἀπεχοίμεθα,
σπονδὰς ποιήσαιντ᾽ ἂν ταχέως, εὖ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι.

Λαμπιτώ

ὁ γῶν Μενέλαος τᾶς Ἑλένας τὰ μᾶλά πᾳ
γυμνᾶς παραϊδὼν ἐξέβαλ᾽, οἰῶ, τὸ ξίφος.

Καλονίκη

τί δ᾽ ἢν ἀφιῶσ᾽ ἄνδρες ἡμᾶς ὦ μέλε;

Λυσιστράτη

τὸ τοῦ Φερεκράτους, κύνα δέρειν δεδαρμένην.

Καλονίκη

φλυαρία ταῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ τὰ μεμιμημένα.
ἐὰν λαβόντες δ᾽ ἐς τὸ δωμάτιον βίᾳ
ἕλκωσιν ἡμᾶς;

Λυσιστράτη
ἀντέχου σὺ τῶν θυρῶν.

Καλονίκη

ἐὰν δὲ τύπτωσιν;

Λυσιστράτη
παρέχειν χρὴ κακὰ κακῶς.
οὐ γὰρ ἔνι τούτοις ἡδονὴ τοῖς πρὸς βίαν.

κἄλλως ὀδυνᾶν χρή: κἀμέλει ταχέως πάνυ
ἀπεροῦσιν. οὐ γὰρ οὐδέποτ᾽ εὐφρανθήσεται
ἀνήρ, ἐὰν μὴ τῇ γυναικὶ συμφέρῃ.

Καλονίκη

εἴ τοι δοκεῖ σφῷν ταῦτα, χἠμῖν ξυνδοκεῖ.

Λαμπιτώ

καὶ τὼς μὲν ἁμῶν ἄνδρας ἁμὲς πείσομες
παντᾷ δικαίως ἄδολον εἰράναν ἄγειν:
τὸν τῶν Ἀσαναίων γα μὰν ῥυάχετον
πᾷ κά τις ἀμπείσειεν αὖ μὴ πλαδδιῆν;

Λυσιστράτη

ἡμεῖς ἀμέλει σοι τά γε παρ᾽ ἡμῖν πείσομεν.

Λαμπιτώ

οὐχ ἇς πόδας κ᾽ ἔχωντι ταὶ τριήρεες,
καὶ τὠργύριον τὤβυσσον ᾗ πὰρ τᾷ σιῷ.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀλλ᾽ ἔστι καὶ τοῦτ᾽ εὖ παρεσκευασμένον:
καταληψόμεθα γὰρ τὴν ἀκρόπολιν τήμερον.
ταῖς πρεσβυτάταις γὰρ προστέτακται τοῦτο δρᾶν,
ἕως ἂν ἡμεῖς ταῦτα συντιθώμεθα,
θύειν δοκούσαις καταλαβεῖν τὴν ἀκρόπολιν.

Λαμπιτώ

παντᾷ κ᾽ ἔχοι, καὶ τᾷδε γὰρ λέγεις καλῶς.

Λυσιστράτη

τί δῆτα ταῦτ᾽ οὐχ ὡς τάχιστ᾽ ὦ Λαμπιτοῖ
ξυνωμόσαμεν, ὅπως ἂν ἀρρήκτως ἔχῃ;

Λαμπιτώ

πάρφαινε μὰν τὸν ὅρκον, ὡς ὀμιόμεθα.

Λυσιστράτη

καλῶς λέγεις. ποῦ ‘σθ᾽ ἡ Σκύθαινα; ποῖ βλέπεις;
θὲς ἐς τὸ πρόσθεν ὑπτίαν τὴν ἀσπίδα,
καί μοι δότω τὰ τόμιά τις.

Καλονίκη
Λυσιστράτη
τίν᾽ ὅρκον ὀρκώσεις ποθ᾽ ἡμᾶς;

Λυσιστράτη
ὅντινα;
εἰς ἀσπίδ᾽, ὥσπερ φάσ᾽ ἐν Αἰσχύλῳ ποτέ,
μηλοσφαγούσας.

Καλονίκη
μὴ σύ γ᾽ ὦ Λυσιστράτη
εἰς ἀσπίδ᾽ ὀμόσῃς μηδὲν εἰρήνης πέρι.

Λυσιστράτη

τίς ἂν οὖν γένοιτ᾽ ἂν ὅρκος;

Καλονίκη
εἰ λευκόν ποθεν
ἵππον λαβοῦσαι τόμιον ἐντεμοίμεθα.

Λυσιστράτη

ποῖ λευκὸν ἵππον;

Καλονίκη
ἀλλὰ πῶς ὀμούμεθα
ἡμεῖς;

Λυσιστράτη

ἐγώ σοι νὴ Δί᾽, ἢν βούλῃ, φράσω.
θεῖσαι μέλαιναν κύλικα μεγάλην ὑπτίαν,
μηλοσφαγοῦσαι Θάσιον οἴνου σταμνίον
ὀμόσωμεν ἐς τὴν κύλικα μὴ ‘πιχεῖν ὕδωρ.

Λαμπιτώ

φεῦ δᾶ τὸν ὅρκον ἄφατον ὡς ἐπαινίω.

Λυσιστράτη

φερέτω κύλικά τις ἔνδοθεν καὶ σταμνίον.

Μυρρίνη

ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ὁ κεραμεὼν ὅσος.

Καλονίκη

ταύτην μὲν ἄν τις εὐθὺς ἡσθείη λαβών.

Λυσιστράτη

καταθεῖσα ταύτην προσλαβοῦ μοι τοῦ κάπρου.
δέσποινα Πειθοῖ καὶ κύλιξ φιλοτησία,
τὰ σφάγια δέξαι ταῖς γυναιξὶν εὐμενής.

Καλονίκη

εὔχρων γε θαῖμα κἀποπυτίζει καλῶς.

Λαμπιτώ

καὶ μὰν ποτόδδει γ᾽ ἁδὺ ναὶ τὸν Κάστορα.

Μυρρίνη

ἐᾶτε πρώτην μ᾽ ὦ γυναῖκες ὀμνύναι.

Καλονίκη

μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην οὔκ, ἐάν γε μὴ λάχῃς.

Λυσιστράτη

λάζυσθε πᾶσαι τῆς κύλικος ὦ Λαμπιτοῖ:
λεγέτω δ᾽ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν μί᾽ ἅπερ ἂν κἀγὼ λέγω:
ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ἑπομεῖσθε ταὐτὰ κἀμπεδώσετε.
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς οὔτε μοιχὸς οὔτ᾽ ἀνήρ —

Καλονίκη

οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς οὔτε μοιχὸς οὔτ᾽ ἀνήρ —

Λυσιστράτη

ὅστις πρὸς ἐμὲ πρόσεισιν ἐστυκώς. λέγε.

Καλονίκη

ὅστις πρὸς ἐμὲ πρόσεισιν ἐστυκώς. παπαῖ
ὑπολύεταί μου τὰ γόνατ᾽ ὦ Λυσιστράτη.

Λυσιστράτη

οἴκοι δ᾽ ἀταυρώτη διάξω τὸν βίον —

Καλονίκη

οἴκοι δ᾽ ἀταυρώτη διάξω τὸν βίον —

Λυσιστράτη

κροκωτοφοροῦσα καὶ κεκαλλωπισμένη, —

Καλονίκη

κροκωτοφοροῦσα καὶ κεκαλλωπισμένη, —

Λυσιστράτη

ὅπως ἂν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτυφῇ μάλιστά μου:

Καλονίκη

ὅπως ἂν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτυφῇ μάλιστά μου:

Λυσιστράτη

κοὐδέποθ᾽ ἑκοῦσα τἀνδρὶ τὠμῷ πείσομαι.

Καλονίκη

κοὐδέποθ᾽ ἑκοῦσα τἀνδρὶ τὠμῷ πείσομαι.

Λυσιστράτη

ἐὰν δέ μ᾽ ἄκουσαν βιάζηται βίᾳ, —

Καλονίκη

ἐὰν δέ μ᾽ ἄκουσαν βιάζηται βίᾳ, —

Λυσιστράτη

κακῶς παρέξω κοὐχὶ προσκινήσομαι.

Καλονίκη

κακῶς παρέξω κοὐχὶ προσκινήσομαι.

Λυσιστράτη

οὐ πρὸς τὸν ὄροφον ἀνατενῶ τὼ Περσικά.

Καλονίκη

οὐ πρὸς τὸν ὄροφον ἀνατενῶ τὼ Περσικά.

Λυσιστράτη

οὐ στήσομαι λέαιν᾽ ἐπὶ τυροκνήστιδος.

Καλονίκη

οὐ στήσομαι λέαιν᾽ ἐπὶ τυροκνήστιδος.

Λυσιστράτη

ταῦτ᾽ ἐμπεδοῦσα μὲν πίοιμ᾽ ἐντευθενί:

Καλονίκη

ταῦτ᾽ ἐμπεδοῦσα μὲν πίοιμ᾽ ἐντευθενί:

Λυσιστράτη

εἰ δὲ παραβαίην, ὕδατος ἐμπλῇθ᾽ ἡ κύλιξ.

Καλονίκη

εἰ δὲ παραβαίην, ὕδατος ἐμπλῇθ᾽ ἡ κύλιξ.

Λυσιστράτη

συνεπόμνυθ᾽ ὑμεῖς ταῦτα πᾶσαι;

Πᾶσαι
νὴ Δία.

Λυσιστράτη

φέρ᾽ ἐγὼ καθαγίσω τήνδε.

Καλονίκη
τὸ μέρος γ᾽ ὦ φίλη,
ὅπως ἂν ὦμεν εὐθὺς ἀλλήλων φίλαι.

Λαμπιτώ

τίς ὠλολυγά;

Λυσιστράτη
τοῦτ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ οὐγὼ ‘λεγον:
αἱ γὰρ γυναῖκες τὴν ἀκρόπολιν τῆς θεοῦ

ἤδη κατειλήφασιν. ἀλλ᾽ ὦ Λαμπιτοῖ
σὺ μὲν βάδιζε καὶ τὰ παρ᾽ ὑμῶν εὖ τίθει,
τασδὶ δ᾽ ὁμήρους κατάλιφ᾽ ἡμῖν ἐνθάδε:
ἡμεῖς δὲ ταῖς ἄλλαισι ταῖσιν ἐν πόλει
ξυνεμβάλωμεν εἰσιοῦσαι τοὺς μοχλούς.

Καλονίκη

οὔκουν ἐφ᾽ ἡμᾶς ξυμβοηθήσειν οἴει
τοὺς ἄνδρας εὐθύς;

Λυσιστράτη
ὀλίγον αὐτῶν μοι μέλει.
οὐ γὰρ τοσαύτας οὔτ᾽ ἀπειλὰς οὔτε πῦρ
ἥξουσ᾽ ἔχοντες ὥστ᾽ ἀνοῖξαι τὰς πύλας
ταύτας, ἐὰν μὴ ‘φ᾽ οἷσιν ἡμεῖς εἴπομεν.

Καλονίκη

μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην οὐδέποτέ γ᾽: ἄλλως γὰρ ἂν
ἄμαχοι γυναῖκες καὶ μιαραὶ κεκλήμεθ᾽ ἄν.

Χορὸς γερόντων

χώρει Δράκης, ἡγοῦ βάδην, εἰ καὶ τὸν ὦμον ἀλγεῖς
κορμοῦ τοσουτονὶ βάρος χλωρᾶς φέρων ἐλάας. **Χορὸς γερόντων**

ἦ πόλλ᾽ ἄελπτ᾽ ἔνεστιν ἐν τῷ μακρῷ βίῳ φεῦ,
ἐπεὶ τίς ἄν ποτ᾽ ἤλπισ᾽ ὦ Στρυμόδωρ᾽ ἀκοῦσαι
γυναῖκας, ἃς ἐβόσκομεν
κατ᾽ οἶκον ἐμφανὲς κακόν,
κατὰ μὲν ἄγιον ἔχειν βρέτας,
κατὰ δ᾽ ἀκρόπολιν ἐμὰν λαβεῖν
μοχλοῖς δὲ καὶ κλῄθροισι
τὰ προπύλαια πακτοῦν; **Χορὸς γερόντων**

ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα πρὸς πόλιν σπεύσωμεν ὦ Φιλοῦργε,
ὅπως ἄν, αὐταῖς ἐν κύκλῳ θέντες τὰ πρέμνα ταυτί,
ὅσαι τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτ᾽ ἐνεστήσαντο καὶ μετῆλθον,
μίαν πυρὰν νήσαντες ἐμπρήσωμεν αὐτόχειρες

πάσας, ὑπὸ ψήφου μιᾶς, πρώτην δὲ τὴν Λύκωνος. **Χορὸς γερόντων**

οὐ γὰρ μὰ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽ ἐμοῦ ζῶντος ἐγχανοῦνται:
ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ Κλεομένης, ὃς αὐτὴν κατέσχε πρῶτος,
ἀπῆθεν ἀψάλακτος, ἀλλ᾽
ὅμως Λακωνικὸν πνέων
ᾤχετο θώπλα παραδοὺς ἐμοί,
σμικρὸν ἔχων πάνυ τριβώνιον,
πινῶν ῥυπῶν ἀπαράτιλτος,
ἓξ ἐτῶν ἄλουτος. **Χορὸς γερόντων**

οὕτως ἐπολιόρκησ᾽ ἐγὼ τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἐκεῖνον ὠμῶς
ἐφ᾽ ἑπτακαίδεκ᾽ ἀσπίδων πρὸς ταῖς πύλαις καθεύδων.
τασδὶ δὲ τὰς Εὐριπίδῃ θεοῖς τε πᾶσιν ἐχθρὰς
ἐγὼ οὐκ ἄρα σχήσω παρὼν τολμήματος τοσούτου;
μή νυν ἔτ᾽ ἐν τῇ τετραπόλει τοὐμὸν τροπαῖον εἴη. **Χορὸς γερόντων**

ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸ γάρ μοι τῆς ὁδοῦ
λοιπόν ἐστι χωρίον
τὸ πρὸς πόλιν τὸ σιμόν, οἷ σπουδὴν ἔχω:
χὤπως ποτ᾽ ἐξαμπρεύσομεν
τοῦτ᾽ ἄνευ κανθηλίου.
ὡς ἐμοῦ γε τὼ ξύλω τὸν ὦμον ἐξιπώκατον:
ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως βαδιστέον,
καὶ τὸ πῦρ φυσητέον,
μή μ᾽ ἀποσβεσθὲν λάθῃ πρὸς τῇ τελευτῇ τῆς ὁδοῦ.
φῦ φῦ.
ἰοὺ ἰοὺ τοῦ καπνοῦ. **Χορὸς γερόντων**

ὡς δεινὸν ὦναξ Ἡράκλεις
προσπεσόν μ᾽ ἐκ τῆς χύτρας
ὥσπερ κύων λυττῶσα τὠφθαλμὼ δάκνει:
κἄστιν γε Λήμνιον τὸ πῦρ
τοῦτο πάσῃ μηχανῇ.
οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποθ᾽ ὧδ᾽ ὀδὰξ ἔβρυκε τὰς λήμας ἐμοῦ.
σπεῦδε πρόσθεν ἐς πόλιν
καὶ βοήθει τῇ θεῷ.
ἢ πότ᾽ αὐτῇ μᾶλλον ἢ νῦν ὦ Λάχης ἀρήξομεν;
φῦ φῦ.

ἰοὺ ἰοὺ τοῦ καπνοῦ. **Χορὸς γερόντων**

τουτὶ τὸ πῦρ ἐγρήγορεν θεῶν ἕκατι καὶ ζῇ.
οὔκουν ἄν, εἰ τὼ μὲν ξύλω θείμεσθα πρῶτον αὐτοῦ,
τῆς ἀμπέλου δ᾽ ἐς τὴν χύτραν τὸν φανὸν ἐγκαθέντες
ἅψαντες εἶτ᾽ ἐς τὴν θύραν κριηδὸν ἐμπέσοιμεν;
κἂν μὴ καλούντων τοὺς μοχλοὺς χαλῶσιν αἱ γυναῖκες,
ἐμπιμπράναι χρὴ τὰς θύρας καὶ τῷ καπνῷ πιέζειν.
θώμεσθα δὴ τὸ φορτίον. φεῦ τοῦ καπνοῦ βαβαιάξ.
τίς ξυλλάβοιτ᾽ ἂν τοῦ ξύλου τῶν ἐν Σάμῳ στρατη γῶν;
ταυτὶ μὲν ἤδη τὴν ῥάχιν θλίβοντά μου πέπαυται.
σὸν δ᾽ ἔργον ἐστὶν ὦ χύτρα τὸν ἄνθρακ᾽ ἐξεγείρειν,
τὴν λαμπάδ᾽ ἡμμένην ὅπως πρώτιστ᾽ ἐμοὶ προσοίσεις.
δέσποινα Νίκη ξυγγενοῦ τῶν τ᾽ ἐν πόλει γυναικῶν
τοῦ νῦν παρεστῶτος θράσους θέσθαι τροπαῖον ἡμᾶς.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

λιγνὺν δοκῶ μοι καθορᾶν καὶ καπνὸν ὦ γυναῖκες
ὥσπερ πυρὸς καομένου: σπευστέον ἐστὶ θᾶττον.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

πέτου πέτου Νικοδίκη,
πρὶν ἐμπεπρῆσθαι Καλύκην
τε καὶ Κρίτυλλαν περιφυσήτω
†ὑπό τε νόμων † ἀργαλέων
ὑπό τε γερόντων ὀλέθρων.
ἀλλὰ φοβοῦμαι τόδε, μῶν ὑστερόπους βοηθῶ.
νῦν δὴ γὰρ ἐμπλησαμένη τὴν ὑδρίαν κνεφαία
μόλις ἀπὸ κρήνης ὑπ᾽ ὄχλου καὶ θορύβου καὶ πατάγου
χυτρείου,
δούλαισιν ὠστιζομένη

*

στιγματίαις θ᾽, ἁρπαλέως
ἀραμένη ταῖσιν ἐμαῖς
δημότισιν καομέναις
φέρουσ᾽ ὕδωρ βοηθῶ. **Χορὸς Γυναικῶν**

ἤκουσα γὰρ τυφογέροντας
ἄνδρας ἔρρειν, στελέχη
φέροντας ὥσπερ βαλανεύσοντας
ἐς πόλιν ὡς τριτάλαντον βάρος,
δεινότατ᾽ ἀπειλοῦντας ἐπῶν
ὡς πυρὶ χρὴ τὰς μυσαρὰς γυναῖκας ἀνθρακεύειν:
ἃς ὦ θεὰ μή ποτ᾽ ἐγὼ πιμπραμένας ἴδοιμι,
ἀλλὰ πολέμου καὶ μανιῶν ῥυσαμένας Ἑλλάδα καὶ
πολίτας,
ἐφ᾽ οἷσπερ ὦ χρυσολόφα
πολιοῦχε σὰς ἔσχον ἕδρας.
καί σε καλῶ ξύμμαχον ὦ
Τριτογένει᾽, εἴ τις ἐκείνας
ὑποπίμπρησιν ἀνήρ,
φέρειν ὕδωρ μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν. **Χορὸς Γυναικῶν**

ἔασον ὦ. τουτὶ τί ἦν; ὦνδρες πόνῳ πόνηροι:
οὐ γάρ ποτ᾽ ἂν χρηστοί γ᾽ ἔδρων οὐδ᾽ εὐσεβεῖς τάδ᾽ ἄνδρες.

Χορὸς γερόντων

τουτὶ τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ἡμῖν ἰδεῖν ἀπροσδόκητον ἥκει:
ἑσμὸς γυναικῶν οὑτοσὶ θύρασιν αὖ βοηθεῖ.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

τί βδύλλεθ᾽ ἡμᾶς; οὔ τί που πολλαὶ δοκοῦμεν εἶναι;
καὶ μὴν μέρος γ᾽ ἡμῶν ὁρᾶτ᾽ οὔπω τὸ μυριοστόν.

Χορὸς γερόντων

ὦ Φαιδρία ταύτας λαλεῖν ἐάσομεν τοσαυτί;
οὐ περικατᾶξαι τὸ ξύλον τύπτοντ᾽ ἐχρῆν τιν᾽ αὐταῖς;

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

θώμεσθα δὴ τὰς κάλπιδας χἠμεῖς χαμᾶζ᾽, ὅπως ἂν
ἦν προσφέρῃ τὴν χεῖρά τις μὴ τοῦτό μ᾽ ἐμποδίζῃ.

Χορὸς γερόντων

εἰ νὴ Δί᾽ ἤδη τὰς γνάθους τούτων τις ἢ δὶς ἢ τρὶς
ἔκοψεν ὥσπερ Βουπάλου, φωνὴν ἂν οὐκ ἂν εἶχον.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

καὶ μὴν ἰδοὺ παταξάτω τις: στᾶσ᾽ ἐγὼ παρέξω,
κοὐ μή ποτ᾽ ἄλλη σου κύων τῶν ὄρχεων λάβηται.

Χορὸς γερόντων

εἰ μὴ σιωπήσει, θενών σου ‘κκοκκιῶ τὸ γῆρας.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

ἅψαι μόνον Στρατυλλίδος τῷ δακτύλῳ προσελθών.

Χορὸς γερόντων

τί δ᾽ ἦν σποδῶ τοῖς κονδύλοις; τί μ᾽ ἐργάσει τὸ δεινόν;

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

βρύκουσά σου τοὺς πλεύμονας καὶ τἄντερ᾽ ἐξαμήσω.

Χορὸς γερόντων

οὐκ ἔστ᾽ ἀνὴρ Εὐριπίδου σοφώτερος ποιητής:
οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτω θρέμμ᾽ ἀναιδές ἐστιν ὡς γυναῖκες.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

αἰρώμεθ᾽ ἡμεῖς θοὔδατος τὴν κάλπιν ὦ Ῥοδίππη.

Χορὸς γερόντων

τί δ᾽ ὦ θεοῖς ἐχθρὰ σὺ δεῦρ᾽ ὕδωρ ἔχουσ᾽ ἀφίκου;

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

τί δαὶ σὺ πῦρ ὦ τύμβ᾽ ἔχων; ὡς σαυτὸν ἐμπυρεύσων;

Χορὸς γερόντων

ἐγὼ μὲν ἵνα νήσας πυρὰν τὰς σὰς φίλας ὑφάψω.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ ἵνα τὴν σὴν πυρὰν τούτῳ κατασβέσαιμι.

Χορὸς γερόντων

τοὐμὸν σὺ πῦρ κατασβέσεις;

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν
τοὔργον τάχ᾽ αὐτὸ δείξει.

Χορὸς γερόντων

οὐκ οἶδά σ᾽ εἰ τῇδ᾽ ὡς ἔχω τῇ λαμπάδι σταθεύσω.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

εἰ ῥύμμα τυγχάνεις ἔχων, λουτρόν γ᾽ ἐγὼ παρέξω.

Χορὸς γερόντων

ἐμοὶ σὺ λουτρὸν ὦ σαπρά;

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν
καὶ ταῦτα νυμφικόν γε.

Χορὸς γερόντων

ἤκουσας αὐτῆς τοῦ θράσους;

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν
ἐλευθέρα γάρ εἰμι.

Χορὸς γερόντων

σχήσω σ᾽ ἐγὼ τῆς νῦν βοῆς.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκέθ᾽ ἡλιάζει.

Χορὸς γερόντων

ἔμπρησον αὐτῆς τὰς κόμας.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν
σὸν ἔργον ὦχελῷε.

Χορὸς γερόντων

οἴμοι τάλας.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν
μῶν θερμὸν ἦν;

Χορὸς γερόντων

ποῖ θερμόν; οὐ παύσει; τί δρᾷς;

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

ἄρδω σ᾽ ὅπως ἂν βλαστάνῃς.

Χορὸς γερόντων

385 ἀλλ᾽ αὖός εἰμ᾽ ἤδη τρέμων.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ πῦρ ἔχεις, σὺ χλιανεῖς σεαυτόν.

Πρόβουλος

ἆρ᾽ ἐξέλαμψε τῶν γυναικῶν ἡ τρυφὴ
χὠ τυμπανισμὸς χοἱ πυκνοὶ Σαβάζιοι,
ὅ τ᾽ Ἀδωνιασμὸς οὗτος οὐπὶ τῶν τεγῶν,
390 οὗ ‘γώ ποτ᾽ ὢν ἤκουον ἐν τἠκκλησίᾳ;
ἔλεγε δ᾽ ὁ μὴ ὥρασι μὲν Δημόστρατος

πλεῖν ἐς Σικελίαν, ἡ γυνὴ δ᾽ ὀρχουμένη
‘αἰαῖ Ἄδωνιν’ φησίν, ὁ δὲ Δημόστρατος
ἔλεγεν ὁπλίτας καταλέγειν Ζακυνθίων:
ἡ δ᾽ ὑποπεπωκυῖ᾽ ἡ γυνὴ ‘πὶ τοῦ τέγους
‘κόπτεσθ᾽ Ἄδωνιν’ φησίν: ὁ δ᾽ ἐβιάζετο
ὁ θεοῖσιν ἐχθρὸς καὶ μιαρὸς Χολοζύγης.
τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἀκόλαστ᾽ ᾄσματα.

Χορὸς γερόντων

τί δῆτ᾽ ἂν εἰ πύθοιο καὶ τὴν τῶνδ᾽ ὕβριν;
αἳ τἄλλα θ᾽ ὑβρίκασι κἀκ τῶν καλπίδων
ἔλουσαν ἡμᾶς, ὥστε θαἰματίδια
σείειν πάρεστιν ὥσπερ ἐνεουρηκότας.

Πρόβουλος

νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ τὸν ἁλυκὸν δίκαιά γε.
ὅταν γὰρ αὐτοὶ ξυμπονηρευώμεθα
ταῖσιν γυναιξὶ καὶ διδάσκωμεν τρυφᾶν,
τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν βλαστάνει βουλεύματα.
οἳ λέγομεν ἐν τῶν δημιουργῶν τοιαδί:
‘ὦ χρυσοχόε τὸν ορμον ὃν ἐπεσκεύασας,
ὀρχουμένης μου τῆς γυναικὸς ἑσπέρας
ἡ βάλανος ἐκπέπτωκεν ἐκ τοῦ τρήματος.
ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν ἔστ᾽ ἐς Σαλαμῖνα πλευστέα:
σὺ δ᾽ ἢν σχολάσῃς, πάσῃ τέχνῃ πρὸς ἑσπέραν
ἐλθὼν ἐκείνῃ τὴν βάλανον ἐνάρμοσον.’
ἕτερος δέ τις πρὸς σκυτοτόμον ταδὶ λέγει
νεανίαν καὶ πέος ἔχοντ᾽ οὐ παιδικόν:
‘ὦ σκυτοτόμε μου τῆς γυναικὸς τοῦ ποδὸς
τὸ δακτυλίδιον ξυμπιέζει τὸ ζυγὸν
ἄθ᾽ ἁπαλὸν ὄν: τοῦτ᾽ οὖν σὺ τῆς μεσημβρίας
ἐλθὼν χάλασον, ὅπως ἂν εὐρυτέρως ἔχῃ.’
τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀπήντηκ᾽ ἐς τοιαυτὶ πράγματα,
ὅτε γ᾽ ὢν ἐγὼ πρόβουλος, ἐκπορίσας ὅπως
κωπῆς ἔσονται, τἀργυρίου νυνὶ δέον,
ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν ἀποκέκλῃμαι ταῖς πύλαις.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἔργον ἑστάναι. φέρε τοὺς μοχλούς,

ὅπως ἂν αὐτὰς τῆς ὕβρεως ἐγὼ σχέθω.
τί κέχηνας ὦ δύστηνε; ποῖ δ᾽ αὖ σὺ βλέπεις,
οὐδὲν ποιῶν ἀλλ᾽ ἢ καπηλεῖον σκοπῶν;
οὐχ ὑποβαλόντες τοὺς μοχλοὺς ὑπὸ τὰς πύλας
ἐντεῦθεν ἐκμοχλεύσετ᾽; ἐνθενδὶ δ᾽ ἐγὼ
ξυνεκμοχλεύσω.

Λυσιστράτη
μηδὲν ἐκμοχλεύετε:
ἐξέρχομαι γὰρ αὐτομάτη. τί δεῖ μοχλῶν;
οὐ γὰρ μοχλῶν δεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ νοῦ καὶ φρενῶν.

Πρόβουλος

ἆληθες ὦ μιαρὰ σύ; ποῦ ‘σθ᾽ ὁ τοξότης;
ξυλλάμβαν᾽ αὐτὴν κὠπίσω τὼ χεῖρε δεῖ.

Λυσιστράτη

εἴ τἄρα νὴ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν τὴν χεῖρά μοι
ἄκραν προσοίσει δημόσιος ὤν, κλαύσεται.

Πρόβουλος

ἔδεισας οὗτος; οὐ ξυναρπάσει μέσην
καὶ σὺ μετὰ τούτου κἀνύσαντε δήσετον;

Γυνὴ Α

εἴ τἄρα νὴ τὴν Πάνδροσον ταύτῃ μόνον
τὴν χεῖρ᾽ ἐπιβαλεῖς, ἐπιχεσεῖ πατούμενος.

Πρόβουλος

ἰδού γ᾽ἐπιχεσεῖ. ποῦ ‘στιν ἕτερος τοξότης;
ταύτην προτέραν ξύνδησον, ὁτιὴ καὶ λαλεῖ.

Γυνὴ Β

εἴ τἄρα νὴ τὴν Φωσφόρον τὴν χεῖρ᾽ ἄκραν

ταύτῃ προσοίσεις, κύαθον αἰτήσεις τάχα.

Πρόβουλος

τουτὶ τί ἦν; ποῦ τοξότης; ταύτης ἔχου.
παύσω τιν᾽ ὑμῶν τῆσδ᾽ ἐγὼ τῆς ἐξόδου.

Γυνὴ Γ

εἴ τἄρα νὴ τὴν Ταυροπόλον ταύτῃ πρόσει,
ἐκκοκκιῶ σου τὰς στενοκωκύτους τρίχας.

Πρόβουλος

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων: ἐπιλέλοιφ᾽ ὁ τοξότης.
ἀτὰρ οὐ γυναικῶν οὐδέποτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ἡττητέα
ἡμῖν: ὁμόσε χωρῶμεν αὐταῖς ὦ Σκύθαι
ξυνταξάμενοι.

Λυσιστράτη
νὴ τὼ θεὼ γνώσεσθ᾽ ἄρα
ὅτι καὶ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν εἰσι τέτταρες λόχοι
μαχίμων γυναικῶν ἔνδον ἐξωπλισμένων.

Πρόβουλος

ἀποστρέφετε τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν ὦ Σκύθαι.

Λυσιστράτη

ὦ ξύμμαχοι γυναῖκες ἐκθεῖτ᾽ ἔνδοθεν,
ὦ σπερμαγοραιολεκιθολαχανοπώλιδες,
ὦ σκοροδοπανδοκευτριαρτοπώλιδες,
οὐχ ἕλξετ᾽, οὐ παιήσετ᾽, οὐκ ἀράξετε;
οὐ λοιδορήσετ᾽, οὐκ ἀναισχυντήσετε;
παύσασθ᾽, ἐπαναχωρεῖτε, μὴ σκυλεύετε.

Πρόβουλος

οἴμ᾽ ὡς κακῶς πέπραγέ μου τὸ τοξικόν.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀλλὰ τί γὰρ ᾧου; πότερον ἐπὶ δούλας τινὰς
ἥκειν ἐνόμισας, ἢ γυναιξὶν οὐκ οἴει
χολὴν ἐνεῖναι;

Πρόβουλος
νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω καὶ μάλα
πολλήν γ᾽, ἐάνπερ πλησίον κάπηλος ᾖ.

Χορὸς γερόντων

ὦ πόλλ᾽ ἀναλώσας ἔπη πρόβουλε τῆσδε τῆς γῆς,
τί τοῖσδε σαυτὸν ἐς λόγους τοῖς θηρίοις συνάπτεις;
οὐκ οἶσθα λουτρὸν οἷον αἵδ᾽ ἡμᾶς ἔλουσαν ἄρτι
ἐν τοῖσιν ἱματιδίοις, καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἄνευ κονίας;

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ μέλ᾽ οὐ χρὴ προσφέρειν τοῖς πλησίοισιν εἰκῇ
τὴν χεῖρ᾽: ἐὰν δὲ τοῦτο δρᾷς, κυλοιδιᾶν ἀνάγκη.
ἐπεὶ ‘θέλω ‘γὼ σωφρόνως ὥσπερ κόρη καθῆσθαι,
λυποῦσα μηδέν᾽ ἐνθαδί, κινοῦσα μηδὲ κάρφος,
ἢν μή τις ὥσπερ σφηκιὰν βλίττῃ με κἀρεθίζῃ.

Χορὸς γερόντων

ὦ Ζεῦ τί ποτε χρησόμεθα τοῖσδε τοῖς κνωδάλοις;
ου᾽ γὰρ ἔτ᾽ ἀνεκτὰ τάδε γ᾽, ἀλλὰ βασανιστέον
τόδε σοι τὸ πάθος μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ
ὅ τι βουλόμεναί ποτε τὴν
Κραναὰν κατέλαβον, ἐφ᾽ ὅ τι τε
μεγαλόπετρον ἄβατον ἀκρόπολιν
ἱερὸν τέμενος. **Χορὸς γερόντων**

ἀλλ᾽ ἀνερώτα καὶ μὴ πείθου καὶ πρόσφερε πάντας ἐλέγχους,
ὡς αἰσχρὸν ἀκωδώνιστον ἐᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον πρᾶγμα μεθέντας. **Πρόβουλος**

καὶ μὴν αὐτῶν τοῦτ᾽ ἐπιθυμῶ νὴ τὸν Δία πρῶτα πυθέσθαι,
ὅ τι βουλόμεναι τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν ἀπεκλῄσατε τοῖσι μοχλοῖσιν.

Λυσιστράτη

ἵνα τἀργύριον σῶν παρέχοιμεν καὶ μὴ πολεμοῖτε δι᾽ αὐτό.

Πρόβουλος

διὰ τἀργύριον πολεμοῦμεν γάρ;

Λυσιστράτη
καὶ τἄλλα γε πάντ᾽ ἐκυκήθη.
ἵνα γὰρ Πείσανδρος ἔχοι κλέπτειν χοὶ ταῖς ἀρχαῖς ἐπέχοντες,
ἀεί τινα κορκορυγὴν ἐκύκων. οἱ δ᾽ οὖν τοῦδ᾽ οὕνεκα δρώντων
ὅ τι βούλονται: τὸ γὰρ ἀργύριον τοῦτ᾽ οὐκέτι μὴ καθέλωσιν.

Πρόβουλος

ἀλλὰ τί δράσεις;

Λυσιστράτη
τοῦτό μ᾽ ἐρωτᾷς; ἡμεῖς ταμιεύσομεν αὐτό.

Πρόβουλος

ὑμεῖς ταμιεύσετε τἀργύριον;

Λυσιστράτη
τί δὲ δεινὸν τοῦτο νομίζεις;
οὐ καὶ τἄνδον χρήματα πάντως ἡμεῖς ταμιεύομεν ὑμῖν;

Πρόβουλος

ἀλλ᾽ οὐ ταὐτόν.

Λυσιστράτη
πῶς οὐ ταὐτόν;

Πρόβουλος
πολεμητέον ἔστ᾽ ἀπὸ τούτου.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν δεῖ πρῶτον πολεμεῖν.

Πρόβουλος
πῶς γὰρ σωθησόμεθ᾽ ἄλλως;

Λυσιστράτη

ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς σώσομεν.

Πρόβουλος
ὑμεῖς;

Λυσιστράτη
ἡμεῖς μέντοι.

Πρόβουλος
σχέτλιόν γε.

Λυσιστράτη

ὡς σωθήσει, κἂν μὴ βούλῃ.

Πρόβουλος
δεινόν γε λέγεις.

Λυσιστράτη
ἀγανακτεῖς.
ἀλλὰ ποιητέα ταῦτ᾽ ἐστὶν ὅμως.

Πρόβουλος
νὴ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽ ἄδικόν γε.

Λυσιστράτη

σωστέον ᾧ τᾶν.

Πρόβουλος
κεἰ μὴ δέομαι;

Λυσιστράτη

τοῦδ᾽ οὕνεκα καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον.

Πρόβουλος

ὑμῖν δὲ πόθεν περὶ τοῦ πολέμου τῆς τ᾽ εἰρήνης ἐμέλησεν;

Λυσιστράτη

ἡμεῖς φράσομεν.

Πρόβουλος
λέγε δὴ ταχέως, ἵνα μὴ κλάῃς,

Λυσιστράτη
ἀκροῶ δή,
καὶ τὰς χεῖρας πειρῶ κατέχειν.

Πρόβουλος
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ δύναμαι: χαλεπὸν γὰρ
ὑπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτὰς ἴσχειν.

Γυνὴ Α.
κλαύσει τοίνυν πολὺ μᾶλλον.

Πρόβουλος

τοῦτο μὲν ὦ γραῦ σαυτῇ κρώξαις: σὺ δέ μοι λέγε.

Λυσιστράτη
ταῦτα ποιήσω.
ἡμεῖς τὸν μὲν πρότερον πόλεμον † καὶ τὸν χρόνον ἠνεσχόμεθα †
ὑπὸ σωφροσύνης τῆς ἡμετέρας τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἄττ᾽ ἐποιεῖτε.
οὐ γὰρ γρύζειν εἰᾶθ᾽ ἡμᾶς. καίτοὐκ ἠρέσκετέ γ᾽ ἡμᾶς.
ἀλλ᾽ ᾐσθανόμεσθα καλῶς ὑμῶν, καὶ πολλάκις ἔνδον ἂν οὖσαι
ἠκούσαμεν ἄν τι κακῶς ὑμᾶς βουλευσαμένους μέγα πρᾶγμα:
εἶτ᾽ ἀλγοῦσαι τἄνδοθεν ὑμᾶς ἐπανηρόμεθ᾽ ἂν γελάσασαι,
‘τί βεβούλευται περὶ τῶν σπονδῶν ἐν τῇ στήλῃ παραγράψαι
ἐν τῷ δήμῳ τήμερονὑμῖν;’ ‘τίδὲ σοὶ ταῦτ᾽;’ ἦ δ᾽ ὃς ἂν ἀνήρ.
‘οὐ σιγήσει;’ κἀγὼ ἐσίγων.

Γυνὴ Β.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἂν ἐγώ ποτ᾽ ἐσίγων.

Πρόβουλος

κἂν ᾠμωζές γ᾽, εἰ μὴ ‘σίγας.

Λυσιστράτη
τοιγὰρ ἔγωγ᾽ ἔνδον ἐσίγων.
... ἕτερόν τι πονηρότερον βούλευμ᾽ ἐπεπύσμεθ᾽ ἂν ὑμῶν:
εἶτ᾽ ἠρόμεθ᾽ ἄν: ‘πῶς ταῦτ᾽ ὤνερ διαπράττεσθ᾽ ὦδ᾽ ἀνοήτως;’
ὁ δέ μ᾽ εὐθὺς ὑποβλέψας ἂν ἔφασκ᾽, εἰ μὴ τὸν στήμονα νήσω,
ὀτοτύξεσθαι μακρὰ τὴν κεφαλήν: ‘πόλεμος δ᾽ ἀνδρεσσι μελήσει.’

Πρόβουλος

ὀρθῶς γε λέγων νὴ Δί᾽ ἐκεῖνος.

Λυσιστράτη
πῶς ὀρθῶς ὦ κακόδαιμον,
εἰ μηδὲ κακῶς βουλευομένοις ἐξῆν ὑμῖν ὑποθέσθαι;
ὅτε δὴ δ᾽ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς φανερῶς ἠκούομεν ἤδη,
‘οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνὴρ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ;’ ‘μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ δῆτ᾽,’ εἶφ᾽ ἕτερός τις:
μετὰ ταῦθ᾽ ἡμῖν εὐθὺς ἔδοξεν σῶσαι τὴν Ἑλλάδα κοινῇ
ταῖσι γυναιξὶν συλλεχθείσαις. ποῖ γὰρ καὶ χρῆν ἀναμεῖναι;
ἢν οὖν ἡμῶν χρηστὰ λεγουσῶν ἐθελήσητ᾽ ἀντακροᾶσθαι
κἀντισιωπᾶθ᾽ ὥσπερ χἠμεῖς, ἐπανορθώσαιμεν ἂν ὑμᾶς.

Πρόβουλος

ὑμεῖς ἡμᾶς; δεινόν γε λέγεις κοὐ τλητὸν ἔμοιγε.

Λυσιστράτη
σιώπα.

Πρόβουλος

σοί γ᾽ ὦ κατάρατε σιωπῶ ‘γώ, καὶ ταῦτα κάλυμμα φορούσῃ
περὶ τὴν κεφαλήν; μή νυν ζῴην.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀλλ᾽ εἰ τοῦτ᾽ ἐμπόδιόν σοι,
παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ τουτὶ τὸ κάλυμμα λαβὼν
ἔχε καὶ περίθου περὶ τὴν κεφαλήν,
κᾆτα σιώπα

Γυνὴ Γ.

καὶ τοῦτον τὸν καλαθίσκον.

Λυσιστράτη

κᾆτα ξαίνειν ξυζωσάμενος
κυάμους τρώγων:
πόλεμος δὲ γυναιξὶ μελήσει.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

αἰρώμεθ᾽ ὦ γυναῖκες ἀπὸ τῶν καλπίδων, ὅπως ἂν
ἐν τῷ μέρει χἠμεῖς τι ταῖς φίλαισι συλλάβωμεν. **Χορὸς Γυναικῶν**

ἔγωγε γὰρ ἂν οὔποτε κάμοιμ᾽ ἂν ὀρχουμένη,
†οὐδὲ τὰ γόνατα κόπος ἕλοι μου καματηρός†:
ἐθέλω δ᾽ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἰέναι
μετὰ τῶνδ᾽ ἀρετῆς ἕνεχ᾽, αἷς
ἔνι φύσις, ἔνι χάρις, ἔνι θράσος,
ἔνι δὲ σοφόν, ἔνι δὲ φιλόπολις
ἀρετὴ φρόνιμος. **Χορὸς Γυναικῶν**

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ τηθῶν ἀνδρειοτάτων καὶ μητριδίων ἀκαληφῶν,
χωρεῖτ᾽ ὀργῇ καὶ μὴ τέγγεσθ᾽: ἔτι γὰρ νῦν οὔρια θεῖτε. **Λυσιστράτη**

ἀλλ᾽ ἥνπερ ὅ τε γλυκύθυμος Ἔρως χἠ Κυπρογένει᾽ Ἀφροδίτη
ἵμερον ἡμῶν κατὰ τῶν κόλπων καὶ τῶν μηρῶν καταπνεύσῃ,
κᾆτ᾽ ἐντήξῃ τέτανον τερπνὸν τοῖς ἀνδράσι καὶ ῥοπαλισμούς,
οἶμαί ποτε Λυσιμάχας ἡμᾶς ἐν τοῖς Ἕλλησι καλεῖσθαι.

Πρόβουλος

τί ποιησάσας;

Λυσιστράτη
ἢν παύσωμεν πρώτιστον μὲν ξὺν ὅπλοισιν
ἀγοράζοντας καὶ μαινομένους.

Γυνὴ Α.
νὴ τὴν Παφίαν Ἀφροδίτην.

Λυσιστράτη

νῦν μὲν γὰρ δὴ κἀν ταῖσι χύτραις κἀν τοῖς λαχάνοισιν ὁμοίως
περιέρχονται κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν ξὺν ὅπλοις ὥσπερ Κορύβαντες.

Πρόβουλος

νὴ Δία: χρὴ γὰρ τοὺς ἀνδρείους.

Λυσιστράτη
καὶ μὴν τό γε πρᾶγμα γέλοιον,
ὅταν ἀσπίδ᾽ ἔχων καὶ Γοργόνα τις κᾆτ᾽ ὠνῆται κορακίνους.

Γυνὴ Β.

νὴ Δί᾽ ἐγὼ γοῦν ἄνδρα κομήτην φυλαρχοῦντ᾽ εἶδον ἐφ᾽ ἵππου
ἐς τὸν χαλκοῦν ἐμβαλλόμενον πῖλον λέκιθον παρὰ γραός:
ἕτερος δ᾽ αὖ Θρᾷξ πέλτην σείων κἀκόντιον ὥσπερ ὁ Τηρεύς,
ἐδεδίσκετο τὴν ἰσχαδόπωλιν καὶ τὰς δρυπεπεῖς κατέπινεν.

Πρόβουλος

πῶς οὖν ὑμεῖς δυναταὶ παῦσαι τεταραγμένα πράγματα πολλὰ
ἐν ταῖς χώραις καὶ διαλῦσαι;

Λυσιστράτη
φαύλως πάνυ.

Πρόβουλος
πῶς; ἀπόδειξον.

Λυσιστράτη

ὥσπερ κλωστῆρ᾽, ὅταν ἡμῖν ᾖ τεταραγμένος, ὧδε λαβοῦσαι,
ὑπενεγκοῦσαι τοῖσιν ἀτράκτοις τὸ μὲν ἐνταυθοῖ τὸ δ᾽ ἐκεῖσε,
οὕτως καὶ τὸν πόλεμον τοῦτον διαλύσομεν, ἤν τις ἐάσῃ,
διενεγκοῦσαι διὰ πρεσβειῶν τὸ μὲν ἐνταυθοῖ τὸ δ᾽ ἐκεῖσε.

Πρόβουλος

ἐξ ἐρίων δὴ καὶ κλωστήρων καὶ ἀτράκτων πράγματα δεινὰ
παύσειν οἴεσθ᾽ ὦ ἀνόητοι;

Λυσιστράτη
κἂν ὑμῖν γ᾽ εἴ τις ἐνῆν νοῦς,
ἐκ τῶν ἐρίων τῶν ἡμετέρων ἐπολιτεύεσθ᾽ ἂν ἅπαντα.

Πρόβουλος

πῶς δή; φέρ᾽ ἴδω.

Λυσιστράτη
πρῶτον μὲν ἐχρῆν, ὥσπερ πόκου ἐν βαλανείῳ
ἐκπλύναντας τὴν οἰσπώτην, ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ἐπὶ κλίνης
ἐκραβδίζειν τοὺς μοχθηροὺς καὶ τοὺς τριβόλους ἀπολέξαι,
καὶ τούς γε συνισταμένους τούτους καὶ τοὺς πιλοῦντας ἑαυτοὺς
ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀρχαῖσι διαξῆναι καὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς ἀποτῖλαι:
εἶτα ξαίνειν ἐς καλαθίσκον κοινὴν εὔνοιαν, ἅπαντας
καταμιγνύντας τούς τε μετοίκους κεἴ τις ξένος ἢ φίλος ὑμῖν,
κεἴ τις ὀφείλει τῷ δημοσίῳ, καὶ τούτους ἐγκαταμεῖξαι:
καὶ νὴ Δία τάς γε πόλεις, ὁπόσαι τῆς γῆς τῆσδ᾽ εἰσὶν ἄποικοι,
διαγιγνώσκειν ὅτι ταῦθ᾽ ἡμῖν ὥσπερ τὰ κατάγματα κεῖται
χωρὶς ἕκαστον: κᾆτ᾽ ἀπὸ τούτων πάντων τὸ κάταγμα λαβόντας
δεῦρο ξυνάγειν καὶ συναθροίξειν εἰς ἕν, κἄπειτα ποιῆσαι
τολύπην μεγάλην κᾆτ᾽ ἐκ ταύτης τῷ δήμῳ χλαῖναν ὑφῆναι.

Πρόβουλος

οὔκουν δεινὸν ταυτὶ ταύτας ῥαβδίξειν καὶ τολυπεύειν,
αἷς οὐδὲ μετῆν πάνυ τοῦ πολέμου;

Λυσιστράτη
καὶ μὴν ὦ παγκατάρατε
πλεῖν ἤ γε διπλοῦν αὐτὸν φέρομεν, πρώτιστον μέν γε τεκοῦσαι
κἀκπέμψασαι παῖδας ὁπλίτας.

Πρόβουλος
σίγα, μὴ μνησικακήσῃς.

Λυσιστράτη

εἶθ᾽ ἡνίκα χρῆν εὐφρανθῆναι καὶ τῆς ἥβης ἀπολαῦσαι,
μονοκοιτοῦμεν διὰ τὰς στρατιάς. καὶ θἠμέτερον μὲν ἐᾶτε,
περὶ τῶν δὲ κορῶν ἐν τοῖς θαλάμοις γηρασκουσῶν ἀνιῶμαι.

Πρόβουλος

οὔκουν χἄνδρες γηράσκουσιν;

Λυσιστράτη
μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ
εἶπας ὅμοιον.
ὁ μὲν ἥκων γάρ, κἂν ᾖ πολιός, ταχὺ παῖδα κόρην γεγάμηκεν:
τῆς δὲ γυναικὸς σμικρὸς ὁ καιρός, κἂν τούτου μὴ ‘πιλάβηται,
οὐδεὶς ἐθέλει γῆμαι ταύτην, ὀττευομένη δὲ κάθηται.

Πρόβουλος

ἀλλ᾽ ὅστις ἔτι στῦσαι δυνατὸς —

Λυσιστράτη

σὺ δὲ δὴ τί μαθὼν οὐκ ἀποθνῄσκεις;
†χωρίον ἐστί:† σορὸν ὠνήσει:
μελιτοῦτταν ἐγὼ καὶ δὴ μάξω.
λαβὲ ταυτὶ καὶ στεφάνωσαι.

Γυνὴ Ξ.

καὶ ταυτασὶ δέξαι παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ.

Γυνὴ Α.

καὶ τουτονγὶ λαβὲ τὸν στέφανον.

Λυσιστράτη

τοῦ δεῖ; τί ποθεῖς; χώρει ‘ς τὴν ναῦν:
ὁ Χάρων σε καλεῖ,
σὺ δὲ κωλύεις ἀνάγεσθαι.

Πρόβουλος

εἶτ᾽ οὐχὶ ταῦτα δεινὰ πάσχειν ἔστ᾽ ἐμέ;
νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ τοῖς προβούλοις ἄντικρυς
ἐμαυτὸν ἐπιδείξω βαδίζων ὡς ἔχω.

Λυσιστράτη

μῶν ἐγκαλεῖς ὅτι οὐχὶ προὐθέμεσθά σε;
ἀλλ᾽ ἐς τρίτην γοῦν ἡμέραν σοὶ πρῲ πάνυ
ἥξει παρ᾽ ἡμῶν τὰ τρίτ᾽ ἐπεσκευασμένα.

Χορὸς γερόντων

οὐκέτ᾽ ἔργον ἐγκαθεύδειν ὅστις ἔστ᾽ ἐλεύθερος,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπαποδυώμεθ᾽ ἄνδρες τουτῳὶ τῷ πράγματι.
ἤδη γὰρ ὄζειν ταδὶ πλειόνων καὶ μειζόνων

Χορὸς γερόντων

πραγμάτων μοι δοκεῖ,
καὶ μάλιστ᾽ ὀσφραίνομαι τῆς Ἱππίου τυραννίδος:
καὶ πάνυ δέδοικα μὴ τῶν Λακώνων τινὲς
δεῦρο συνεληλυθότες ἄνδρες ἐς Κλεισθένους
τὰς θεοῖς ἐχθρὰς γυναῖκας ἐξεπαίρωσιν δόλῳ
καταλαβεῖν τὰ χρήμαθ᾽ ἡμῶν τόν τε μισθόν,
ἔνθεν ἔζων ἐγώ.

Χορὸς γερόντων

δεινὰ γάρ τοι τάσδε γ᾽ ἤδη τοὺς πολίτας νουθετεῖν,
καὶ λαλεῖν γυναῖκας οὔσας ἀσπίδος χαλκῆς πέρι,
καὶ διαλλάττειν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀνδράσιν Λακωνικοῖς,
οἷσι πιστὸν οὐδὲν εἰ μή περ λύκῳ κεχηνότι.
ἀλλὰ ταῦθ᾽ ὕφηναν ἡμῖν ἄνδρες ἐπὶ τυραννίδι.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐμοῦ μὲν οὐ τυραννεύσουσ᾽, ἐπεὶ φυλάξομαι
καὶ φορήσω τὸ ξίφος τὸ λοιπὸν ἐν μύρτου κλαδί,
ἀγοράσω τ᾽ ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις ἐξῆς Ἀριστογείτονι,
ὧδέ θ᾽ ἑστήξω παρ᾽ αὐτόν: †αὐτὸς† γάρ μοι γίγνεται
τῆς θεοῖς ἐχθρᾶς πατάξαι τῆσδε γραὸς τὴν γνάθον. **Χορὸς Γυναικῶν**

οὐκ ἄρ᾽ εἰσιόντα σ᾽ οἴκαδ᾽ ἡ τεκοῦσα γνώσεται.
ἀλλὰ θώμεσθ᾽ ὦ φίλαι γρᾶες ταδί πρῶτον χαμαί.
ἡμεῖς γὰρ ὦ πάντες ἀστοὶ λόγων κατάρχομεν
τῇ πόλει χρησίμων:
εἰκότως, ἐπεὶ χλιδῶσαν ἀγλαῶς ἔθρεψέ με.
ἑπτὰ μὲν ἔτη γεγῶσ᾽ εὐθὺς ἠρρηφόρουν:
εἶτ᾽ ἀλετρὶς ἦ δεκέτις οὖσα τἀρχηγέτι:
κᾆτ᾽ ἔχουσα τὸν κροκωτὸν ἄρκτος ἦ Βραυρωνίοις:
κἀκανηφόρουν ποτ᾽ οὖσα παῖς καλὴ ‘χουσ᾽
ἰσχάδων ὁρμαθόν: **Χορὸς Γυναικῶν**

ἆρα προὐφείλω τι χρηστὸν τῇ πόλει παραινέσαι;
εἰ δ᾽ ἐγὼ γυνὴ πέφυκα, τοῦτο μὴ φθονεῖτέ μοι,
ἢν ἀμείνω γ᾽ εἰσενέγκω τῶν παρόντων πραγμάτων.
τοὐράνου γάρ μοι μέτεστι: καὶ γὰρ ἄνδρας ἐσφέρω,
τοῖς δὲ δυστήνοις γέρουσιν οὐ μέτεσθ᾽ ὑμῖν, ἐπεὶ
τὸν ἔρανον τὸν λεγόμενον παππῷον ἐκ τῶν Μηδικῶν
εἶτ᾽ ἀναλώσαντες οὐκ ἀντεσφέρετε τὰς ἐσφοράς,
ἀλλ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ὑμῶν διαλυθῆναι προσέτι κινδυνεύομεν.
ἆρα γρυκτόν ἐστιν ὑμῖν; εἰ δὲ λυπήσεις τί με,
τῷδέ γ᾽ ἀψήκτῳ πατάξω τῷ κοθόρνῳ τὴν γνάθον. **Χορὸς γερόντων**

ταῦτ᾽ οὖν οὐχ ὕβρις τὰ πράγματ᾽ ἐστὶ
πολλή; κἀπιδώσειν μοι δοκεῖ τὸ χρῆμα μᾶλλον.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀμυντέον τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ὅστις γ᾽ ἐνόρχης ἔστ᾽ ἀνήρ.
ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐξωμίδ᾽ ἐκδυώμεθ᾽, ὡς τὸν ἄνδρα δεῖ
ἀνδρὸς ὄζειν εὐθύς, ἀλλ᾽ οὐν ἐντεθριῶσθαι πρέπει.
ἀλλ᾽ ἄγετε λευκόποδες, οἵπερ επὶ Λείψύδριον ἤλθομεν ὅτ᾽ ἦμεν ἔτι,

νῦν δεῖ νῦν ἀνηβῆσαι πάλιν κἀναπτερῶσαι
πᾶν τὸ σῶμα κἀποσείσασθαι τὸ γῆρας τόδε. **Χορὸς γερόντων**

εἰ γὰρ ἐνδώσει τις ἡμῶν ταῖσδε κἂν σμικρὰν λαβήν,
οὐδὲν ἐλλείψουσιν αὗται λιπαροῦς χειρουργίας,
ἀλλὰ καὶ ναῦς τεκτανοῦνται, κἀπιχειρήσουσ᾽ ἔτι
ναυμαχεῖν καὶ πλεῖν ἐφ᾽ ἡμᾶς ὥσπε, Ἀρτεμισία.
ἢν δ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ἱππικὴν τράπωνται, διαγράφω τοὺς ἱππέας.
ἱππικώτατον γάρ ἐστι χρῆμα κἄποχον γυνή,
κοὐκ ἂν ἀπολίσθοι τρέχοντος: τὰς δ᾽ Ἀμαζόνας σκόπει,
ἃς Μίκων ἔγραψ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ἵππων μαχομένας τοῖς ἀνδράσιν.
ἀλλὰ τούτων χρῆν ἁπασῶν ἐς τετρημένον ξύλον
ἐγκαθαρμόσαι λαβόντας τουτονὶ τὸν αὐχένα. **Χορὸς Γυναικῶν**

εἰ νὴ τὼ θεώ με ζωπυρήσεις,
λύσω τὴν ἐμαυτῆς ὖν ἐγὼ δή, καὶ ποιήσω
τήμερον τοὺς δημότας βωστρεῖν σ᾽ ἐγὼ πεκτούμενον.
ἀλλὰ χἠμεῖς ὦ γυναῖκες θᾶττον ἐκδυώμεθα,
ὡς ἂν ὄζωμεν γυναικῶν αὐτοδὰξ ὠργισμένων.
νῦν πρὸς ἔμ᾽ ἴτω τις, ἵνα μή ποτε φάγῃ σκόροδα, μηδὲ
κυάμους μέλανας.
ὡς εἰ καὶ μόνον κακῶς ἐρεῖς, ὑπερχολῶ γάρ,
αἰετὸν τίκτοντα κάνθαρός σε μαιεύσομαι. **Χορὸς Γυναικῶν**

οὐ γὰρ ὑμῶν φροντίσαιμ᾽ ἄν, ἢν ἐμοὶ ζῇ Λαμπιτὼ
ἥ τε Θηβαία φίλη παῖς εὐγενὴς Ἰσμηνία.
οὐ γὰρ ἔσται δύναμις, οὐδ᾽ ἢν ἑπτάκις σὺ ψηφίσῃ,
ὅστις ὦ δύστην᾽ ἀπήχθου πᾶσι καὶ τοῖς γείτοσιν.
ὥστε κἀχθὲς θἠκάτῃ ποιοῦσα παιγνίαν ἐγὼ
τοῖσι παισὶ τὴν ἑταίραν ἐκάλεσ᾽ ἐκ τῶν γειτόνων,
παῖδα χρηστὴν κἀγαπητὴν ἐκ Βοιωτῶν ἔγχελυν:
οἱ δὲ πέμψειν οὐκ ἔφασκον διὰ τὰ σὰ ψηφίσματα.
κοὐχὶ μὴ παύσησθε τῶν ψηφισμάτων τούτων, πρὶν ἂν
τοῦ σκέλους ὑμᾶς λαβών τις ἐκτραχηλίσῃ φέρων. **Χορὸς Γυναικῶν**

ἄνασσα πράγους τοῦδε καὶ βουλεύματος,
τί μοι σκυθρωπὸς ἐξελήλυθας δόμων;

Λυσιστράτη

κακῶν γυναικῶν ἔργα καὶ θήλεια φρὴν
ποιεῖ μ᾽ ἄθυμον περιπατεῖν τ᾽ ἄνω κάτω.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

τί φῄς; τί φῄς;

Λυσιστράτη

ἀληθῆ, ἀληθῆ.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

τί δ᾽ ἐστὶ δεινόν; φράζε ταῖς σαυτῆς φίλαις.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀλλ᾽ αἰσχρὸν εἰπεῖν καὶ σιωπῆσαι βαρύ.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

μή νύν με κρύψῃς ὅ τι πεπόνθαμεν κακόν.

Λυσιστράτη

βινητιῶμεν, ᾗ βράχιστον τοῦ λόγου.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

ἰὼ Ζεῦ.

Λυσιστράτη

τί Ζῆν᾽ ἀυτεῖς; ταῦτα δ᾽ οὖν οὕτως ἔχει.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν αὐτὰς ἀποσχεῖν οὐκέτι
οἵα τ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν: διαδιδράσκουσι γάρ.
τὴν μέν γε πρώτην διαλέγουσαν τὴν ὀπὴν
κατέλαβον ᾗ τοῦ Πανός ἐστι ταὐλίον,
τὴν δ᾽ ἐκ τροχιλείας αὖ κατειλυσπωμένην,
τὴν δ᾽ αὐτομολοῦσαν, τὴν δ᾽ ἐπὶ στρούθου †μίαν†

ἤδη πέτεσθαι διανοουμένην κάτω
ἐς Ὀρσιλόχου χθὲς τῶν τριχῶν κατέσπασα.
πάσας τε προφάσεις ὥστ᾽ ἀπελθεῖν οἴκαδε
ἕλκουσιν. ἤδη γοῦν τις αὐτῶν ἔρχεται.
αὕτη σὺ ποῖ θεῖς;

Γυνὴ Α.
οἴκαδ᾽ ἐλθεῖν βούλομαι.
οἴκοι γάρ ἐστιν ἔριά μοι Μιλήσια
ὑπὸ τῶν σέων κατακοπτόμενα.

Λυσιστράτη
ποίων σέων;
οὐκ εἶ πάλιν;

Γυνὴ Α.
ἀλλ᾽ ἥξω ταχέως νὴ τὼ θεὼ
ὅσον διαπετάσασ᾽ ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης μόνον.

Λυσιστράτη

μὴ διαπετάννυ, μηδ᾽ ἀπέλθῃς μηδαμῇ.

Γυνὴ Α.

ἀλλ᾽ ἐῶ ‘πολέσθαι τἄρι᾽;

Λυσιστράτη
ἢν τούτου δέῃ.

Γυνὴ Β.

τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ, τάλαινα τῆς Ἀμοργίδος,
ἣν ἄλοπον οἴκοι καταλέλοιφ᾽.

Λυσιστράτη
αὖθὶτέρα
ἐπὶ τὴν Ἄμοργιν τὴν ἄλοπον ἐξέρχεται.
χώρει πάλιν δεῦρ᾽.

Γυνὴ Β.
ἀλλὰ νὴ τὴν Φωσφόρον
ἔγωγ᾽ ἀποδείρασ᾽ αὐτίκα μάλ᾽ ἀνέρχομαι.

Λυσιστράτη

μή μἀποδείρῃς. ἢν γὰρ ἄρξῃς τοῦτο σύ,
ἑτέρα γυνὴ ταὐτὸν ποιεῖν βουλήσεται.

Γυνὴ Γ

ὦ πότνι᾽ Εἰλείθυι᾽ ἐπίσχες τοῦ τόκου,
ἕως ἂν εἰς ὅσιον μόλω ‘γὼ χωρίον.

Λυσιστράτη

τί ταῦτα ληρεῖς;

Γυνὴ Γ
αὐτίκα μάλα τέξομαι.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐκύεις σύ γ᾽ ἐχθές.

Γυνὴ Γ
ἀλλὰ τήμερον.
ἀλλ᾽ οἴκαδέ μ᾽ ὡς τὴν μαῖαν ὦ Λυσιστράτη
ἀπόπεμψον ὡς τάχιστα.

Λυσιστράτη
τίνα λόγον λέγεις;
τί τοῦτ᾽ ἔχεις τὸ σκληρόν;

Γυνὴ Γ
ἄρρεν παιδίον.

Λυσιστράτη

μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην οὐ σύ γ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἢ χαλκίον

ἔχειν τι φαίνει κοῖλον: εἴσομαι δ᾽ ἐγώ.
ὦ καταγέλαστ᾽ ἔχουσα τὴν ἱερὰν κυνῆν
κυεῖν ἔφασκες;

Γυνὴ Γ
καὶ κυῶ γε νὴ Δία.

Λυσιστράτη

τί δῆτα ταύτην εἶχες;

Γυνὴ Γ
ἵνα μ᾽ εἰ καταλάβοι
ὁ τόκος ἔτ᾽ ἐν πόλει, τέκοιμ᾽ ἐς τὴν κυνῆν
ἐσβᾶσα ταύτην, ὥσπερ αἱ περιστεραί.

Λυσιστράτη

τί λέγεις; προφασίζει: περιφανῆ τὰ πράγματα.
οὐ τἀμφιδρόμια τῆς κυνῆς αὐτοῦ μενεῖς;

Γυνὴ Γ

ἀλλ᾽ οὐ δύναμαι ‘γωγ᾽ οὐδὲ κοιμᾶσθ᾽ ἐν πόλει,
ἐξ οὗ τὸν ὄφιν εἶδον τὸν οἰκουρόν ποτε.

Γυνὴ Δ

ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὑπὸ τῶν γλαυκῶν γε τάλαιν᾽ ἀπόλλυμαι
ταῖς ἀγρυπνίαισι κακκαβαζουσῶν ἀεί.

Λυσιστράτη

ὦ δαιμόνιαι παύσασθε τῶν τερατευμάτων.
ποθεῖτ᾽ ἴσως τοὺς ἄνδρας: ἡμᾶς δ᾽ οὐκ οἴει
ποθεῖν ἐκείνους; ἀργαλέας γ᾽ εὖ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι
ἄγουσι νύκτας. ἀλλ᾽ ἀνάσχεσθ᾽ ὦγαθαί,
καὶ προσταλαιπωρήσατ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ὀλίγον χρόνον,
ὡς χρησμὸς ἡμῖν ἐστιν ἐπικρατεῖν, ἐὰν
μὴ στασιάσωμεν: ἔστι δ᾽ ὁ χρησμὸς οὑτοσί.

Γυνὴ Α

λέγ᾽ αὐτὸν ἡμῖν ὅ τι λέγει.

Λυσιστράτη
σιγᾶτε δή.
ἀλλ᾽ ὁπόταν πτήξωσι χελιδόνες εἰς ἕνα χῶρον,
τοὺς ἔποπας φεύγουσαι, ἀπόσχωνταί τε φαλήτων,
παῦλα κακῶν ἔσται, τὰ δ᾽ ὑπέρτερα νέρτερα θήσει
Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης —

Γυνὴ Β
ἐπάνω κατακεισόμεθ᾽ ἡμεῖς;

Λυσιστράτη

ἢν δὲ διαστῶσιν καὶ ἀναπτῶνται πτερύγεσσιν
ἐξ ἱεροῦ ναοῖο χελιδόνες, οὐκέτι δόξει
ὄρνεον οὐδ᾽ ὁτιοῦν καταπυγωνέστερον εἶναι.

Γυνὴ Α

σαφής γ᾽ ὁ χρησμὸς νὴ Δί᾽.

Λυσιστράτη
ὦ πάντες θεοί,
μή νυν ἀπείπωμεν ταλαιπωρούμεναι,
ἀλλ᾽ εἰσίωμεν. καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρὸν τουτογὶ
ὦ φίλταται, τὸν χρησμὸν εἰ προδώσομεν.

Χορὸς γερόντων

μῦθον βούλομαι λέξαι τιν᾽ ὑμῖν, ὅν ποτ᾽ ἤκουσ᾽
αὐτὸς ἔτι παῖς ὤν.
οὕτως ἦν νεανίσκος Μελανίων τις,
ὃς φεύγων γάμον ἀφίκετ᾽ ἐς ἐρημίαν,
κἀν τοῖς ὄρεσιν ᾤκει:
κᾆτ᾽ ἐλαγοθήρει
πλεξάμενος ἄρκυς,
καὶ κύνα τιν᾽ εἶχεν,

κοὐκέτι κατῆλθε πάλιν οἴκαδ᾽ ὑπὸ μίσους.
οὕτω τὰς γυναῖκας ἐβδελύχθη
‘κεῖνος, ἡμεῖς τ᾽ οὐδὲν ἧττον
τοῦ Μελανίωνος οἱ σώφρονες.

γέρων

βούλομαί σε γραῦ κύσαι —

Γυνή

κρόμμυόν τἄρ᾽ οὐκ ἔδει.

γέρων

κἀνατείνας λακτίσαι.

Γυνή

τὴν λόχμην πολλὴν φορεῖς.

Χορὸς γερόντων

καὶ Μυρωνίδης γὰρ ἦν
τραχὺς ἐντεῦθεν μελάμπυγός
τε τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἅπασιν,
ὥς δὲ καὶ Φορμίων.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

κἀγὼ βούλομαι μῦθόν τιν᾽ ὑμῖν ἀντιλέξαι
τῷ Μελανίωνι.
Τίμων ἦν ἀίδρυτός τις ἀβάτοισιν
ἐν σκώλοισι τὸ πρόσωπον περιειργμένος,
Ἐρινύων ἀπορρώξ.
οὗτος οὖν ὁ Τίμων

*

ᾤχεθ᾽ ὑπὸ μίσους
πολλὰ καταρασάμενος ἀνδράσι πονηροῖς.

οὕτω ‘κεῖνος ὑμῶν ἀντεμίσει
τοὺς πονηροὺς ἄνδρας ἀεί,
ταῖσι δὲ γυναιξὶν ἦν φίλτατος.

Γυνή

τὴν γνάθον βούλει θένω;

γέρων

μηδαμῶς: †ἔδεισά γε.†

Γυνή

ἀλλὰ κρούσω τῷ σκέλει;

γέρων

τὸν σάκανδρον ἐκφανεῖς.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως ἂν οὐκ ἴδοις
καίπερ οὖσης γραὸς ὄντ᾽ αὐτὸν
κομήτην, ἀλλ᾽ ἀπεψιλωμένον
τῷ λύχνῳ.

Λυσιστράτη

ἰοὺ ἰοὺ γυναῖκες ἴτε δεῦρ᾽ ὡς ἐμὲ
ταχέως.

Γυνή
τί δ᾽ ἔστιν; εἰπέ μοι τίς ἡ βοή;

Λυσιστράτη

ἄνδρ᾽ ἄνδρ᾽ ὁρῶ προσιόντα παραπεπληγμένον,
τοῖς τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ὀργίοις εἰλημμένον.
ὦ πότνια Κύπρου καὶ Κυθήρων καὶ Πάφου

μεδέουσ᾽, ἴθ᾽ ὀρθὴν ἥνπερ ἔρχι τὴν ὁδόν.

Γυνή

835 ποῦ δ᾽ ἐστὶν ὅστις ἐστί;

Λυσιστράτη
παρὰ τὸ τῆς Χλόης.

Γυνὴ

ὦ νὴ Δί᾽ ἔστι δῆτα. τίς κἀστίν ποτε;

Λυσιστράτη

ὁρᾶτε: γιγνώσκει τις ὑμῶν;

Μυρρίνη
νὴ Δία
ἔγωγε: κἀστὶν οὑμὸς ἀνὴρ Κινησίας.

Λυσιστράτη

σὸν ἔργον ἤδη τοῦτον ὀπτᾶν καὶ στρέφειν
840 κἀξηπεροπεύειν καὶ φιλεῖν καὶ μὴ φιλεῖν,
καὶ πάνθ᾽ ὑπέχειν πλὴν ὧν σύνοιδεν ἡ κύλιξ.

Μυρρίνη

ἀμέλει ποιήσω ταῦτ᾽ ἐγώ.

Λυσιστράτη
καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ
ξυνηπεροπεύσω σοι παραμένουσ᾽ ἐνθαδί,
καὶ ξυσταθεύσω τοῦτον. ἀλλ᾽ ἀπέλθετε.

Κινησίας

845 οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, οἷος ὁ σπασμός μ᾽ ἔχει
χὠ τέτανος ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τροχοῦ στρεβλούμενον.

Λυσιστράτη

τίς οὗτος οὐντὸς τῶν φυλάκων ἐστώς;

Κινησίας
ἐγώ.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀνήρ;

Κινησίας
ἀνὴρ δῆτ᾽.

Λυσιστράτη
οὐκ ἄπει δῆτ᾽ ἐκποδών;

Κινησίας

σὺ δ᾽ εἶ τίς ἡκβάλλουσά μ᾽;

Λυσιστράτη
ἡμεροσκόπος.

Κινησίας

850 πρὸς τῶν θεῶν νυν ἐκκάλεσόν μοι Μυρρίνην.

Λυσιστράτη

ἰδοὺ καλέσω ‘γὼ Μυρρίνην σοι; σὺ δὲ τίς εἶ;

Κινησίας

ἀνὴρ ἐκείνης, Παιονίδης Κινησίας.

Λυσιστράτη

ὦ χαῖρε φίλτατ᾽: οὐ γὰρ ἀκλεὲς τοὔνομ
τὸ σὸν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ἐστιν οὐδ᾽ ἀνώνυμον.

ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡ γυνή σ᾽ ἔχει διὰ στόμα.
κἂν ᾠὸν ἢ μῆλον λάβῃ, ‘Κινησίᾳ
τουτὶ γένοιτο,’ φησίν.

Κινησίας
ὦ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν.

Λυσιστράτη

νὴ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην: κἂν περὶ ἀνδρῶν γ᾽ ἐμπέσῃ
λόγος τις, εἴρηκ᾽ εὐθέως ἡ σὴ γυνὴ
ὅτι λῆρός ἐστι τἄλλα πρὸς Κινησίαν.

Κινησίας

ἴθι νυν κάλεσον αὐτήν.

Λυσιστράτη
τί οὖν; δώσεις τί μοι;

Κινησίας

ἔγωγέ σοι νὴ τὸν Δί᾽, ἢν βούλῃ γε σύ:
ἔχω δὲ τοῦθ᾽: ὅπερ οὖν ἔχω, δίδωμί σοι.

Λυσιστράτη

φέρε νυν καλέσω καταβᾶσά σοι.

Κινησίας
ταχύ νυν πάνυ.
ὡς οὐδεμίαν ἔχω γε τῷ βίῳ χάριν,
ἐξ οὗπερ αὕτη ‘ξῆλθεν ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας:
ἀλλ᾽ ἄχθομαι μὲν εἰσιών, ἔρημα δὲ
εἶναι δοκεῖ μοι πάντα, τοῖς δὲ σιτίοις
χάριν οὐδεμίαν οἶδ᾽ ἐσθίων: ἔστυκα γάρ.

Μυρρίνη

φιλῶ φιλῶ ‘γὼ τοῦτον: ἀλλ᾽ οὐ βούλεται

ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ φιλεῖσθαι. σὺ δ᾽ ἐμὲ τούτῳ μὴ κάλει.

Κινησίας

ὦ γλυκύτατον Μυρρινίδιον τί ταῦτα δρᾷς;
κατάβηθι δεῦρο.

Μυρρίνη
μὰ Δί᾽ ἐγὼ μὲν αὐτόσ᾽ οὔ.

Κινησίας

ἐμοῦ καλοῦντος οὐ καταβήσει Μυρρίνη;

Μυρρίνη

875 οὐ γὰρ δεόμενος οὐδὲν ἐκκαλεῖς ἐμέ.

Κινησίας

ἐγὼ οὐ δεόμενος; ἐπιτετριμμένος μὲν οὖν.

Μυρρίνη

ἄπειμι.

Κινησίας
μὴ δῆτ᾽, ἀλλὰ τῷ γοῦν παιδίῳ
ὑπάκουσον: οὗτος οὐ καλεῖς τὴν μαμμίαν;

Παῖς Κινησίου

μαμμία, μαμμία, μαμμία.

Κινησίας

880 αὕτη τί πάσχεις; οὐδ᾽ ἐλεεῖς τὸ παιδίον
ἄλουτον ὂν κἄθηλον ἕκτην ἡμέραν;

Μυρρίνη

ἔγωγ᾽ ἐλεῶ δῆτ᾽: ἀλλ᾽ ἀμελὴς αὐτῷ πατὴρ
ἔστιν.

Κινησίας
κατάβηθ᾽ ὦ δαιμονία τῷ παιδίῳ.

Μυρρίνη

οἶον τὸ τεκεῖν: καταβατέον. τί γὰρ πάθω;

Κινησίας

ἐμοὶ γὰρ αὕτη καὶ νεωτέρα δοκεῖ
πολλῷ γεγενῆσθαι κἀγανώτερον βλέπειν:
χἀ δυσκολαίνει πρὸς ἐμὲ καὶ βρενθύεται,
ταῦτ᾽ αὐτὰ δή ‘σθ᾽ ἃ κἄμ᾽ ἐπιτρίβει τῷ πόθῳ.

Μυρρίνη

ὦ γλυκύτατον σὺ τεκνίδιον κακοῦ πατρός,
φέρε σε φιλήσω γλυκύτατον τῇ μαμμίᾳ.

Κινησίας

τί ὦ πονήρα ταῦτα ποιεῖς χἀτέραις
πείθει γυναιξί, κἀμέ τ᾽ ἄχθεσθαι ποιεῖς
αὐτή τε λυπεῖ;

Μυρρίνη
μὴ πρόσαγε τὴν χεῖρά μοι.

Κινησίας

τὰ δ᾽ ἔνδον ὄντα τἀμὰ καὶ σὰ χρήματα
χεῖρον διατίθης.

Μυρρίνη
ὀλίγον αὐτῶν μοι μέλει.

Κινησίας

ὀλίγον μέλει σοι τῆς κρόκης φορουμένης
ὑπὸ τῶν ἀλεκτρυόνων;

Μυρρίνη
ἔμοιγε νὴ Δία.

Κινησίας

τὰ δὲ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἱέρ᾽ ἀνοργίαστά σοι
χρόνον τοσοῦτόν ἐστιν. οὐ βαδιεῖ πάλιν;

Μυρρίνη

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐκ ἔγωγ᾽, ἢν μὴ διαλλαχθῆτέ γε
καὶ τοῦ πολέμου παύσησθε.

Κινησίας
τοιγάρ, ἢν δοκῇ,
ποιήσομεν καὶ ταῦτα.

Μυρρίνη
τοιγάρ, ἢν δοκῇ,
κἄγωγ᾽ ἄπειμ᾽ ἐκεῖσε: νῦν δ᾽ ἀπομώμοκα.

Κινησίας

σὺ δ᾽ ἀλλὰ κατακλίνηθι μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ διὰ χρόνου.

Μυρρίνη

οὐ δῆτα: καίτοι σ᾽ οὐκ ἐρῶ γ᾽ ὡς οὐ φιλῶ.

Κινησίας

φιλεῖς; τί οὖν οὐ κατεκλίνης ὦ Μύρριον;

Μυρρίνη

ὦ καταγέλαστ᾽ ἐναντίον τοῦ παιδίου;

Κινησίας

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γ᾽ οἴκαδ᾽ ὦ Μανῆ φέρε.
ἰδοὺ τὸ μέν σοι παιδίον καὶ δὴ ‘κποδών,
910 σὺ δ᾽ οὐ κατακλίνει.

Μυρρίνη
ποῦ γὰρ ἄν τις καὶ τάλαν
δράσειε τοῦθ᾽;

Κινησίας
ὅπου; τὸ τοῦ Πανὸς καλόν.

Μυρρίνη

καὶ πῶς ἔθ᾽ ἁγνὴ δῆτ᾽ ἂν ἔλθοιμ᾽ ἐς πόλιν;

Κινησίας

κάλλιστα δήπου λουσαμένη τῇ Κλεψύδρᾳ.

Μυρρίνη

ἔπειτ᾽ ὀμόσασα δῆτ᾽ ἐπιορκήσω τάλαν;

Κινησίας

915 εἰς ἐμὲ τράποιτο: μηδὲν ὅρκου φροντίσῃς.

Μυρρίνη

φέρε νυν ἐνέγκω κλινίδιον νῷν.

Κινησίας
μηδαμῶς.
ἀρκεῖ χαμαὶ νῷν.

Μυρρίνη
μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω μή σ᾽ ἐγὼ
καίπερ τοιοῦτον ὄντα κατακλινῶ χαμαί.

Κινησίας

ἥ τοι γυνὴ φιλεῖ με, δήλη ‘στὶν καλῶς.

Μυρρίνη

ἰδοὺ κατάκεισ᾽ ἀνύσας τι, κἀγὼ ‘κδύομαι.
καίτοι, τὸ δεῖνα, ψίαθός ἐστ᾽ ἐξοιστέα.

Κινησίας

ποία ψίαθος; μὴ μοί γε.

Μυρρίνη
νὴ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν,
αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἐπὶ τόνου γε.

Κινησίας
δός μοί νυν κύσαι.

Μυρρίνη

ἰδού.

Κινησίας
παπαιάξ: ἦκέ νυν ταχέως πάνυ.

Μυρρίνη

ἰδοὺ ψίαθος: κατάκεισο, καὶ δὴ ‘κδύομαι.
καίτοι, τὸ δεῖνα, προσκεφάλαιον οὐκ ἔχεις.

Κινησίας

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ δέομ᾽ ἔγωγε.

Μυρρίνη
νὴ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἐγώ.

Κινησίας

ἀλλ᾽ ἢ τὸ πέος τόδ᾽ Ἡρακλῆς ξενίζεται.

Μυρρίνη

ἀνίστασ᾽, ἀναπήδησον. ἤδη πάντ᾽ ἔχω.

Κινησίας

ἅπαντα δῆτα. δεῦρό νυν ὦ χρύσιον.

Μυρρίνη

τὸ στρόφιον ἤδη λύομαι. μέμνησό νυν:
μή μ᾽ ἐξαπατήσῃς τὰ περὶ τῶν διαλλαγῶν.

Κινησίας

νὴ Δί᾽ ἀπολοίμην ἆρα.

Μυρρίνη
σισύραν οὐκ ἔχεις.

Κινησίας

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐδὲ δέομαί γ᾽, ἀλλὰ βινεῖν βούλομαι.

Μυρρίνη

ἀμέλει ποιήσεις τοῦτο: ταχὺ γὰρ ἔρχομαι.

Κινησίας

ἄνθρωπος ἐπιτρίψει με διὰ τὰ στρώματα.

Μυρρίνη

ἔπαιρε σαυτόν.

Κινησίας
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπῆρται τοῦτό γε.

Μυρρίνη

βούλει μυρίσω σε;

Κινησίας
μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω μὴ μέ γε.

Μυρρίνη

νὴ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην ἥν τε βούλῃ γ᾽ ἥν τε μή.

Κινησίας

εἶθ᾽ ἐκχυθείη τὸ μύρον ὦ Ζεῦ δέσποτα.

Μυρρίνη

πρότεινέ νυν τὴν χεῖρα κἀλείφου λαβών.

Κινησίας

οὐχ ἡδὺ τὸ μύρον μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω τουτογί,
εἰ μὴ διατριπτικόν γε κοὐκ ὄζον γάμων.

Μυρρίνη

τάλαιν᾽ ἐγὼ τὸ Ῥόδιον ἤνεγκον μύρον.

Κινησίας

ἀγαθόν: ἔα αὖτ᾽ ὦ δαιμονία.

Μυρρίνη
ληρεῖς ἔχων.

Κινησίας

κάκιστ᾽ ἀπόλοιθ᾽ ὁ πρῶτος ἐψήσας μύρον.

Μυρρίνη

λαβὲ τόνδε τὸν ἀλάβαστον.

Κινησίας
ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερον ἔχω.
ἀλλ᾽ ᾠζυρὰ κατάκεισο καὶ μή μοι φέρε
μηδέν.

Μυρρίνη
ποιήσω ταῦτα νὴ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν.
ὑπολύομαι γοῦν. ἀλλ᾽ ὅπως ὦ φίλτατε
σπονδὰς ποιεῖσθαι ψηφιεῖ.

Κινησίας
βουλεύσομαι.
ἀπολώλεκέν με κἀπιτέτριφεν ἡ γυνὴ
τά τ᾽ ἄλλα πάντα κἀποδείρασ᾽ οἴχεται.

Κινησίας

οἴμοι τί πάθω; τίνα βινήσω
τῆς καλλίστης πασῶν ψευσθείς;
πῶς ταυτηνὶ παιδοτροφήσω;
ποῦ Κυναλώπηξ;
μίσθωσόν μοι τὴν τίτθην.

Χορὸς γερόντων

ἐν δεινῷ γ᾽ ὦ δύστηνε κακῷ
τείρει ψυχὴν ἐξαπατηθείς.
κἄγωγ᾽ οἰκτίρω σ᾽ αἰαῖ.
ποῖος γὰρ ἂν ἢ νέφρος ἀντίσχοι,
ποία ψυχή, ποῖοι δ᾽ ὄρχεις,
ποία δ᾽ ὀσφῦς, ποῖος δ᾽ ὄρρος
κατατεινόμενος
καὶ μὴ βινῶν τοὺς ὄρθρους;

Κινησίας

ὦ Ζεῦ δεινῶν ἀντισπασμῶν.

Χορὸς γερόντων

ταυτὶ μέντοι νυνί σ᾽ ἐποίησ᾽
ἡ παμβδελυρὰ καὶ παμμυσαρά.

Κινησίας

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ φίλη καὶ παγγλυκερά.

Χορὸς γερόντων

ποία γλυκερά; μιαρὰ μιαρά.

Κινησίας

μιαρὰ δῆτ᾽ ὦ Ζεῦ ὦ Ζεῦ:
εἶθ᾽ αὐτὴν ὥσπερ τοὺς θωμοὺς
μεγάλῳ τυφῷ καὶ πρηστῆρι
ξυστρέψας καὶ ξυγγογγύλας
οἴχοιο φέρων, εἶτα μεθείης,
ἡ δὲ φέροιτ᾽ αὖ πάλιν ἐς τὴν γῆν,
κᾆτ᾽ ἐξαίφνης
περὶ τὴν ψωλὴν περιβαίη.

Κῆρυξ Λακεδαιμονίων

πᾷ τᾶν Ἀσανᾶν ἐστιν ἀ γερωχία
ἢ τοὶ πρυτάνιες; λῶ τι μυσίξαι νέον.

Κινησίας

σὺ δ᾽ εἶ πότερον ἄνθρωπος ἢ κονίσαλος;

Κῆρυξ Λακεδαιμονίων

κᾶρυξ ἐγὼν ὦ κυρσάνιε ναὶ τὼ σιὼ
ἔμολον ἀπὸ Σπάρτας περὶ τᾶν διαλλαγᾶν.

Κινησίας

κἄπειτα δόρυ δῆθ᾽ ὑπὸ μάλης ἥκεις ἔχων;

Κῆρυξ Λακεδαιμονίων

οὐ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐκ ἐγών γα.

Κινησίας
ποῖ μεταστρέφει;
τί δὴ προβάλλει τὴν χλαμύδ᾽; ἢ βουβωνιᾷς
ὑπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ;

Κῆρυξ Λακεδαιμονίων
παλαιόρ γα ναὶ τὸν Κάστορα
ὥνθρωπος.

Κινησίας
ἀλλ᾽ ἔστυκας ὦ μιαρώτατε.

Κῆρυξ Λακεδαιμονίων

οὐ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐκ ἐγών γα: μηδ᾽ αὖ πλαδδίη.

Κινησίας

τί δ᾽ ἐστί σοι τοδί;

Κῆρυξ Λακεδαιμονίων
σκυτάλα Λακωνικά.

Κινησίας

εἴπερ γε χαὔτη ‘στὶ σκυτάλη Λακωνική.
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς πρὸς εἰδότ᾽ ἐμὲ σὺ τἀληθῆ λέγε.
τί τὰ πράγμαθ᾽ ὑμῖν ἐστι τἀν Λακεδαίμονι;

Κῆρυξ Λακεδαιμονίων

ὀρσὰ Λακεδαίμων πᾶα καὶ τοὶ σύμμαχοι
ἅπαντες ἐστύκαντι: Πελλάνας δὲ δεῖ.

Κινησίας

ἀπὸ τοῦ δὲ τουτὶ τὸ κακὸν ὑμῖν ἐνέπεσεν;
ἀπὸ Πανός;

Κῆρυξ Λακεδαιμονίων
οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ ἦρχεν οἰῶ Λαμπιτώ,
ἔπειτα τἄλλαι ταὶ κατὰ Σπάρταν ἅμα
γυναῖκες ᾗπερ ἀπὸ μιᾶς ὑσπλαγίδος
ἀπήλααν τὼς ἄνδρας ἀπὸ τῶν ὑσσάκων.

Κινησίας

πῶς οὖν ἔχετε;

Κῆρυξ Λακεδαιμονίων
μογίομες. ἂν γὰρ τὰν πόλιν
ᾗπερ λυχνοφορίοντες ἐπικεκύφαμες.
ταὶ γὰρ γυναῖκες οὐδὲ τῶ μύρτω σιγεῖν
ἐῶντι, πρίν γ᾽ ἅπαντες ἐξ ἑνὸς λόγω
σπονδὰς ποιησώμεσθα ποττὰν Ἑλλάδα.

Κινησίας

τουτὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα πανταχόθεν ξυνομώμοται
ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν: ἄρτι νυνὶ μανθάνω.
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα φράζε περὶ διαλλαγῶν
αὐτοκράτορας πρέσβεις ἀποπέμπειν ἐνθαδί.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἑτέρους ἐνθένδε τῇ βουλῇ φράσω
πρέσβεις ἑλέσθαι τὸ πέος ἐπιδείξας τοδί.

Κῆρυξ Λακεδαιμονίων

ποτάομαι: κράτιστα γὰρ παντᾷ λέγεις.

Χορὸς γερόντων

οὐδέν ἐστι θηρίον γυναικὸς ἀμαχώτερον,
οὐδὲ πῦρ, οὐδ᾽ ὦδ᾽ ἀναιδὴς οὐδεμία πόρδαλις.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

ταῦτα μέντοι σὺ ξυνιεὶς εἶτα πολεμεῖς ἐμοί,
ἐξὸν ᾧ πόνηρε σοὶ βέβαιον ἔμ᾽ ἔχειν φίλην;

Χορὸς γερόντων

ὡς ἐγὼ μισῶν γυναῖκας οὐδέποτε παύσομαι.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν βούλῃ σύ: νῦν δ᾽ οὖν οὔ σε περιόψομαι
γυμνὸν ὄνθ᾽ οὕτως. ὁρῶ γὰρ ὡς καταγέλαστος εἶ.
ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐξωμίδ᾽ ἐνδύσω σε προσιοῦσ᾽ ἐγώ.

Χορὸς γερόντων

τοῦτο μὲν μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ πονηρὸν ἐποιήσατε:
ἀλλ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ὀργῆς γὰρ πονηρᾶς καὶ τότ᾽ ἀπέδυν ἐγώ.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

πρῶτα μὲν φαίνει γ᾽ ἀνήρ, εἶτ᾽ οὐ καταγέλαστος εἶ.
κεἴ με μὴ ‘λύπεις, ἐγώ σου κἂν τόδε τὸ θηρίον
τοὐπὶ τὠφθαλμῷ λαβοῦσ᾽ ἐξεῖλον ἂν ὃ νῦν ἔνι.

Χορὸς γερόντων

τοῦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἦν με τοὐπιτρῖβον, δακτύλιος οὑτοσί:
ἐκσκάλευσον αὐτό, κᾆτα δεῖξον ἀφελοῦσά μοι:
ὡς τὸν ὀφθαλμόν γέ μου νὴ τὸν Δία πάλαι δάκνει.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

ἀλλὰ δράσω ταῦτα: καίτοι δύσκολος ἔφυς ἀνήρ.
ἦ μέγ᾽ ὦ Ζεῦ χρῆμ᾽ ἰδεῖν τῆς ἐμπίδος ἔνεστί σοι.
οὐχ ὁρᾷς; οὐκ ἐμπίς ἐστιν ἥδε Τρικορυσία;

Χορὸς γερόντων

νὴ Δί᾽ ὤνησάς γέ μ᾽, ὡς πάλαι γέ μ᾽ ἐφρεωρύχει,
ὥστ᾽ ἐπειδὴ ‘ξηρέθη, ῥεῖ μου τὸ δάκρυον πολύ.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν

ἀλλ᾽ ἀποψήσω σ᾽ ἐγώ, καίτοι πάνυ πονηρὸς εἶ,
καὶ φιλήσω.

Χορὸς γερόντων
μὴ φιλήσῃς.

Χορὸς Γυναικῶν
ἤν τε
βούλῃ γ᾽ ἤν τε μή.

Χορὸς γερόντων

ἀλλὰ μὴ ὥρασ᾽ ἵκοισθ᾽: ὡς ἐστὲ θωπικαὶ φύσει,
κἄστ᾽ ἐκεῖνο τοὔπος ὀρθῶς κοὐ κακῶς εἰρημένον,
οὔτε σὺν πανωλέθροισιν οὔτ᾽ ἄνευ πανωλέθρων.
ἀλλὰ νυνὶ σπένδομαί σοι, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν οὐκέτι
οὔτε δράσω φλαῦρον οὐδὲν οὔθ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ὑμῶν πείσομαι.
ἀλλὰ κοινῇ συσταλέντες τοῦ μέλους ἀρξώμεθα.

Χορός

οὐ παρασκευαζόμεσθα
τῶν πολιτῶν οὐδέν᾽ ὦνδρες
φλαῦρον εἰπεῖν οὐδὲ ἕν.
ἀλλὰ πολὺ τοὔμπαλιν πάντ᾽ ἀγαθὰ καὶ λέγειν
καὶ δρᾶν: ἱκανὰ γὰρ τὰ κακὰ καὶ τὰ παρακείμενα.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπαγγελλέτω πᾶς ἀνὴρ καὶ γυνή,
εἴ τις ἀργυρίδιον δεῖται
λαβεῖν μνᾶς ἢ δύ᾽ ἢ τρεῖς,
ὡς † πόλλ᾽ ἔσω ‘στὶν†
κἄχομεν βαλλάντια.
κἄν ποτ᾽ εἰρήνη φανῇ,
ὅστις ἂν νυνὶ δανείσηται
παρ᾽ ἡμῶν,

ἂν λάβῃ μηκέτ᾽ ἀποδῷ. **Χορός**

ἑστιᾶν δὲ μέλλομεν ξένους
τινὰς Καρυστίους, ἄν-
δρας καλούς τε κἀγαθούς.
κἄστιν ἔτ᾽ ἔτνος τι: καὶ δελφάκιον ἦν τί μοι,
καὶ τοῦτο τέθυχ᾽, ὡς τὰ κρέ᾽ ἔδεσθ᾽ ἁπαλὰ καὶ καλά.
ἥκετ᾽ οὖν εἰς ἐμοῦ τήμερον: πρῲ δὲ χρὴ
τοῦτο δρᾶν λελουμένους αὖ-
τούς τε καὶ τὰ παιδί᾽, εἶτ᾽ εἴσω βαδίζειν,
μηδ᾽ ἐρέσθαι μηδένα,
ἀλλὰ χωρεῖν ἄντικρυς
ὥσπερ οἴκαδ᾽ εἰς ἑαυτῶν
γεννικῶς, ὡς
ἡ θύρα κεκλῄσεται. **Χορός**

καὶ μὴν ἀπὸ τῆς Σπάρτης οἰδὶ πρέσβεις ἕλκοντες ὑπήνας
χωροῦσ᾽, ὥσπερ χοιροκομεῖον περὶ τοῖς μηροῖσιν ἔχοντες.

Χορός

ἄνδρες Λάκωνες πρῶτα μέν μοι χαίρετε,
εἶτ᾽ εἴπαθ᾽ ἡμῖν πῶς ἔχοντες ἥκετε.

Λάκων

τί δεῖ ποθ᾽ ὑμὲ πολλὰ μυσίδδειν ἔπη;
ὁρῆν γὰρ ἔξεσθ᾽ ὡς ἔχοντες ἵκομες.

Χορός

βαβαί: νενεύρωται μὲν ἥδε συμφορὰ
δεινῶς, †τεθερμῶσθαί γε† χεῖρον φαίνεται.

Λάκων

ἄφατα. τί κα λέγοι τις; ἀλλ᾽ ὅπᾳ σέλει
παντᾷ τις ἐλσὼν ἀμὶν εἰράναν σέτω.

Χορός

καὶ μὴν ὁρῶ καὶ τούσδε τοὺς αὐτόχθονας
ὥσπερ παλαιστὰς ἄνδρας ἀπὸ τῶν γαστέρων
θαἰμάτι᾽ ἀποστέλλοντας: ὥστε φαίνεται
ἀσκητικὸν τὸ χρῆμα τοῦ νοσήματος.

Ἀθηναῖος

τίς ἂν φράσειε ποῦ᾽ στιν ἡ Λυσιστράτη;
ὡς ἄνδρες ἡμεῖς οὐτοιὶ τοιουτοί.

Χορός

χαὔτη ξυνᾴδει χἠτέρα ταύτῃ νόσῳ.
ἦ που πρὸς ὄρθρον σπασμὸς ὑμᾶς λαμβάνει;

Ἀθηναῖος

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ ταυτὶ δρῶντες ἐπιτετρίμμεθα.
ὥστ᾽ εἴ τις ἡμᾶς μὴ διαλλάξει ταχύ,
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως οὐ Κλεισθένη βινήσομεν.

Χορός

εἰ σωφρονεῖτε, θαἰμάτια λήψεσθ᾽, ὅπως
τῶν Ἑρμοκοπιδῶν μή τις ὑμᾶς ὄψεται.

Ἀθηναῖος

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ εὖ μέντοι λέγεις.

Λάκων
ναὶ τὼ σιὼ
παντᾷ γα. φέρε τὸ ἔσθος ἀμβαλώμεθα.

Ἀθηναῖος

ὦ χαίρετ᾽ ὦ Λάκωνες: αἰσχρά γ᾽ ἐπάθομεν.

Λάκων

ὦ Πολυχαρείδα δεινά κ᾽ αὖ ‘πεπόνθεμες,
αἰ εἶδον ἀμὲ τὤνδρες ἀμπεφλασμένως.

Ἀθηναῖος

ἄγε δὴ Λάκωνες αὖθ᾽ ἕκαστα χρὴ λέγειν.
ἐπὶ τί πάρεστε δεῦρο;

Λάκων
περὶ διαλλαγᾶν
πρέσβεις.

Ἀθηναῖος
καλῶς δὴ λέγετε: χἠμεῖς τουτογί.
τί οὐ καλοῦμεν δῆτα τὴν Λυσιστράην,
ἥπερ διαλλάξειεν ἡμᾶς ἂν μόνη;

Λάκων

ναὶ τὼ σιὼ κἂν λῆτε τὸν Λυσίστρατον.

Ἀθηναῖος

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἡμᾶς, ὡς ἔοικε, δεῖ καλεῖν:
αὐτὴ γάρ, ὡς ἤκουσεν, ἥδ᾽ ἐξέρχεται.

Χορός

χαῖρ᾽ ὦ πασῶν ἀνδρειοτάτη: δεῖ δὴ νυνί σε γενέσθαι
δεινὴν δειλὴν ἀγαθὴν φαύλην σεμνὴν ἀγανὴν πολύπειρον:
ὡς οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῇ σῇ ληφθέντες ἴυγγι
συνεχώρησάν σοι καὶ κοινῇ τἀγκλήματα πάντ᾽ ἐπέτρεψαν.

Λυσιστράτη

ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ χαλεπὸν τοὔργον, εἰ λάβοι γέ τις
ὀργῶντας ἀλλήλων τε μὴ ‘κπειρωμένους.
τάχα δ᾽ εἴσομαι ‘γώ. ποῦ ‘στιν ἡ Διαλλαγή;
πρόσαγε λαβοῦσα πρῶτα τοὺς Λακωνικούς,
καὶ μὴ χαλεπῇ τῇ χειρὶ μηδ᾽ αὐθαδικῇ,

μηδ᾽ ὥσπερ ἡμῶν ἄνδρες ἀμαθῶς τοῦτ᾽ ἔδρων,
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς γυναῖκας εἰκός, οἰκείως πάνυ,
ἢν μὴ διδῷ τὴν χεῖρα, τῆς σάθης ἄγε.
ἴθι καὶ σὺ τούτους τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἄγε,
οὗ δ᾽ ἂν διδῶσι πρόσαγε τούτους λαβομένη.
ἄνδρες Λάκωνες στῆτε παρ᾽ ἐμὲ πλησίον,
ἐνθένδε δ᾽ ὑμεῖς, καὶ λόγων ἀκούσατε.
ἐγὼ γυνὴ μέν εἰμι, νοῦς δ᾽ ἔνεστί μοι,
αὐτὴ δ᾽ ἐμαυτῆς οὐ κακῶς γνώμης ἔχω,
τοὺς δ᾽ ἐκ πατρός τε καὶ γεραιτέρων λόγους
πολλοὺς ἀκούσασ᾽ οὐ μεμούσωμαι κακῶς.
λαβοῦσα δ᾽ ὑμᾶς λοιδορῆσαι βούλομαι
κοινῇ δικαίως, οἳ μιᾶς ἐκ χέρνιβος
βωμοὺς περιρραίνοντες ὥσπερ ξυγγενεῖς
Ὀλυμπίασιν, ἐν Πύλαις, Πυθοῖ (πόσους
εἴποιμ᾽ ἂν ἄλλους, εἴ με μηκύνειν δέοι;)
ἐχθρῶν παρόντων βαρβάρων στρατεύματι
Ἕλληνας ἄνδρας καὶ πόλεις ἀπόλλυτε.
εἷς μὲν λόγος μοι δεῦρ᾽ ἀεὶ περαίνεται.

Ἀθηναῖος

ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀπόλλυμαί γ᾽ ἀπεψωλημένος.

Λυσιστράτη

εἶτ᾽ ὦ Λάκωνες, πρὸς γὰρ ὑμᾶς τρέψομαι,
οὐκ ἴσθ᾽ ὅτ᾽ ἐλθὼν δεῦρο Περικλείδας ποτὲ
ὁ Λάκων Ἀθηναίων ἱκέτης καθέζετο
ἐπὶ τοῖσι βωμοῖς ὠχρὸς ἐν φοινικίδι
στρατιὰν προσαιτῶν; ἡ δὲ Μεσσήνη τότε
ὑμῖν ἐπέκειτο χὠ θεὸς σείων ἅμα.
ἐλθὼν δὲ σὺν ὁπλίταισι τετρακισχιλίοις
Κίμων ὅλην ἔσωσε τὴν Λακεδαίμονα.
ταυτὶ παθόντες τῶν Ἀθηναίων ὕπο
δῃοῦτε χώραν, ἧς ὑπ᾽ εὖ πεπόνθατε;

Ἀθηναῖος

ἀδικοῦσιν οὗτοι νὴ Δί᾽ ὦ Λυσιστράτη.

Λάκων

ἀδικίομες: ἀλλ᾽ ὁ πρωκτὸς ἄφατον ὡς καλός.

Λυσιστράτη

ὑμᾶς δ᾽ ἀφήσειν τοὺς Ἀθηναίους μ᾽ οἴει;
οὐκ ἴσθ᾽ ὅθ᾽ ὑμᾶς οἱ Λάκωνες αὖθις αὖ
κατωνάκας φοροῦντας ἐλθόντες δορὶ
πολλοὺς μὲν ἄνδρας Θετταλῶν ἀπώλεσαν,
πολλοὺς δ᾽ ἑταίρους Ἱππίου καὶ ξυμμάχους,
ξυνεκμαχοῦντες τῇ τόθ᾽ ἡμέρᾳ μόνοι,
κἠλευθέρωσαν κἀντὶ τῆς κατωνάκης
τὸν δῆμον ὑμῶν χλαῖναν ἠμπέσχον πάλιν;

Λάκων

οὔπα γυναῖκ᾽ ὄπωπα χαϊωτεραν.

Ἀθηναῖος

ἐγὼ δὲ κύσθον γ᾽ οὐδέπω καλλίονα.

Λυσιστράτη

τί δῆθ᾽ ὑπηργμένων γε πολλῶν κἀγαθῶν
μάχεσθε κοὐ παύεσθε τῆς μοχθηρίας;
τί δ᾽ οὐ διηλλάγητε; φέρε τί τοὐμποδών;

Λάκων

ἁμές γε λῶμες, αἴ τις ἁμὶν τὤγκυκλον
λῇ τοῦτ᾽ ἀποδόμεν.

Λυσιστράτη
ποῖον ὦ τᾶν;

Λάκων

τὰν Πύλον,
ἅσπερ πάλαι δεόμεθα καὶ βλιμάττομες.

Ἀθηναῖος

μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ τοῦτο μέν γ᾽ οὐ δράσετε.

Λυσιστράτη

ἄφετ᾽ ὦγάθ᾽ αὐτοῖς.

Ἀθηναῖος
κᾆτα τίνα κινήσομεν;

Λυσιστράτη

ἕτερόν γ᾽ ἀπαιτεῖτ᾽ ἀντὶ τούτου χωρίον.

Ἀθηναῖος

τὸ δεῖνα τοίνυν παράδοθ᾽ ἡμῖν τουτονὶ
πρώτιστα τὸν Ἐχινοῦντα καὶ τὸν Μηλιᾶ
κόλπον τὸν ὄπισθεν καὶ τὰ Μεγαρικὰ σκέλη.

Λάκων

οὐ τὼ σιὼ οὐχὶ πάντα γ᾽ ὦ λισσάνιε.

Λυσιστράτη

ἐᾶτε, μηδὲν διαφέρου περὶ σκελοῖν.

Ἀθηναῖος

ἤδη γεωργεῖν γυμνὸς ἀποδὺς βούλομαι.

Λάκων

ἐγὼ δὲ κοπραγωγεῖν γα †πρῶτα† ναὶ τὼ σιώ.

Λυσιστράτη

ἐπὴν διαλλαγῆτε, ταῦτα δράσετε.
ἀλλ᾽ εἰ δοκεῖ δρᾶν ταῦτα, βουλεύσασθε καὶ
τοῖς ξυμμάχοις ἐλθόντες ἀνακοινώσατε.

Ἀθηναῖος

ποίοισιν ὦ τᾶν ξυμμάχοις; ἐστύκαμεν.
οὐ ταὐτὰ δόξει τοῖσι συμμάχοισι νῷν
βινεῖν ἅπασιν;

Λάκων
τοῖσι γῶν ναὶ τὼ σιὼ
ἀμοῖσι.

Ἀθηναῖος
καὶ γὰρ ναὶ μὰ Δία Καρυστίοις.

Λυσιστράτη

καλῶς λέγετε. νῦν οὖν ὅπως ἀγνεύσετε,
ὅπως ἂν αἱ γυναῖκες ὑμᾶς ἐν πόλει
ξενίσωμεν ὧν ἐν ταῖσι κίσταις εἴχομεν.
ὅρκους δ᾽ ἐκεῖ καὶ πίστιν ἀλλήλοις δότε.
κἄπειτα τὴν αὐτοῦ γυναῖχ᾽ ὑμῶν λαβὼν
ἅπεισ᾽ ἕκαστος.

Ἀθηναῖος
ἀλλ᾽ ἴωμεν ὡς τάχος.

Λάκων

ἄγ᾽ ὅπᾳ τυ λῇς.

Ἀθηναῖος
νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ὡς τάχιστ᾽ ἄγε.

Χορός

στρωμάτων δὲ ποικίλων καὶ
χλανιδίων καὶ ξυστίδων καὶ

χρυσίων, ὅσ᾽ ἐστί μοι,
οὐ φθόνος ἔνεστί μοι πᾶσι παρέχειν φέρειν
τοῖς παισίν, ὁπόταν τε θυγάτηρ τινὶ κανηφορῇ.
πᾶσιν ὑμῖν λέγω λαμβάνειν τῶν ἐμῶν
χρημάτων νῦν ἔνδοθεν, καὶ
μηδὲν οὕτως εὖ σεσημάν-
θαι τὸ μὴ οὐχὶ
τοὺς ῥύπους ἀνασπάσαι,
χἄττ᾽ ἂν ἔνδον ᾖ φορεῖν.
ὄψεται δ᾽ οὐδὲν σκοπῶν, εἰ
μή τις ὑμῶν
ὀξύτερον ἐμοῦ βλέπει. **Χορός**

εἰ δέ τῳ μὴ σῖτος ὑμῶν
ἔστι, βόσκει δ᾽ οἰκέτας καὶ
σμικρὰ πολλὰ παιδία,
ἔστι παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ λαβεῖν πυρίδια λεπτὰ μέν,
ὁ δ᾽ ἄρτος ἀπὸ χοίνικος ἰδεῖν μάλα νεανίας.
ὅστις οὖν βούλεται τῶν πενήτων ἴτω
εἰς ἐμοῦ σάκκους ἔχων καὶ
κωρύκους, ὡς λήψεται πυ-
ρούς: ὁ Μανῆς δ᾽
οὑμὸς αὐτοῖς ἐμβαλεῖ.
πρός γε μέντοι τὴν θύραν
προαγορεύω μὴ βαδίζειν
τὴν ἐμήν, ἀλλ᾽
εὐλαβεῖσθαι τὴν κύνα. **Ἀθηναῖος Α.**

ἄνοιγε τὴν θύραν: παραχωρεῖν οὐ θέλεις;
ὑμεῖς τί κάθησθε; μῶν ἐγὼ τῇ λαμπάδι
ὑμᾶς κατακαύσω; φορτικὸν τὸ χωρίον.
οὐκ ἂν ποιήσαιμ᾽. εἰ δὲ πάνυ δεῖ τοῦτο δρᾶν,
ὑμῖν χαρίσασθαι, προσταλαιπωρήσομεν.

Ἀθηναῖος Β

χἠμεῖς γε μετὰ σοῦ ξυνταλαιπωρήσομεν.

Ἀθηναῖος Α.

οὐκ ἄπιτε; κωκύσεσθε τὰς τρίχας μακρά.
οὐκ ἄπιθ᾽, ὅπως ἂν οἱ Λάκωνες ἔνδοθεν
καθ᾽ ἡσυχίαν ἀπίωσιν εὐωχημένοι;

Ἀθηναῖος Β.

οὔπω τοιοῦτον συμπόσιον ὅπωπ᾽ ἐγώ.
ἦ καὶ χαρίεντες ἦσαν οἱ Λακωνικοί:
ἡμεῖς δ᾽ ἐν οἴνῳ συμπόται σοφώτατοι.

Ἀθηναῖος Α.

ὀρθῶς γ᾽, ὁτιὴ νήφοντες οὐχ ὑγιαίνομεν:
ἢν τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἐγὼ πείσω λέγων,
μεθύοντες ἀεὶ πανταχοῖ πρεσβεύσομεν.
νῦν μὲν γὰρ ὅταν ἔλθωμεν ἐς Λακεδαίμονα
νήφοντες, εὐθὺς βλέπομεν ὅ τι ταράξομεν:
ὥσθ᾽ ὅ τι μὲν ἂν λέγωσιν οὐκ ἀκούομεν,
ἃ δ᾽ οὐ λέγουσι, ταῦθ᾽ ὑπονενοήκαμεν,
ἀγγέλλομεν δ᾽ οὐ ταὐτὰ τῶν αὐτῶν πέρι.
νυνὶ δ᾽ ἅπαντ᾽ ἤρεσκεν: ὥστ᾽ εἰ μέν γέ τις
ᾄδοι Τελαμῶνος, Κλειταγόρας ᾄδειν δέον,
ἐπῃνέσαμεν ἂν καὶ προσεπιωρκήσαμεν.
ἀλλ᾽ οὑτοιὶ γὰρ αὖθις ἔρχονται πάλιν
ἐς ταὐτόν. οὐκ ἐρρήσετ᾽ ὦ μαστιγίαι;

Ἀθηναῖος Β.

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ὡς ἤδη γε χωροῦσ᾽ ἔνδοθεν.

Λάκων

ὦ Πολυχαρείδα λαβὲ τὰ φυσατήρια,
ἵν᾽ ἐγὼ διποδιάξω τε κἀείσω καλὸν
ἐς τὼς Ἀσαναίως τε † καὶ ἐς ἡμᾶς ἅμα †.

Ἀθηναῖος

λαβὲ δῆτα τὰς φυσαλλίδας πρὸς τῶν θεῶν,
ὡς ἥδομαί γ᾽ ὑμᾶς ὁρῶν ὀρχουμένους.

Χορὸς Λακεδαιμονίων

ὅρμαον
τὼς κυρσανίως ὦ Μναμοΰνα
τάν τ᾽ ἐμὰν Μῶαν, ἄτις
οἶδεν ἀμὲ τώς τ᾽ Ἀσαναίως,
ὅκα τοὶ μὲν ἐπ᾽ Ἀρταμιτίῳ
πρῶκροον σιοείκελοι
ποττὰ κᾶλα τὼς Μήδως τ᾽ ἐνίκων,
ἀμὲ δ᾽ αὖ Λεωνίδας
ἦγεν ᾗπερ τὼς κάπρως
θάγοντας οἰῶ τὸν ὀδόντα:
πολὺς δ᾽ ἀμφὶ τὰς γένυας ἀφρὸς † ἤνσει †,
πολὺς δ᾽ ἀμᾷ καττῶν σκελῶν ἀφρὸς ἵετο.
ἦν γὰρ τὤνδρες οὐκ ἐλάσσως
τᾶς ψάμμας τοὶ Πέρσαι.
ἀγροτέρα σηροκτόνε
μόλε δεῦρο παρσένε σιὰ
ποττὰς σπονδάς,
ὡς συνέχῃς πολὺν ἀμὲ χρόνον.
νῦν δ᾽ αὖ φιλία τ᾽ αἰὲς εὔπορος εἴη
ταῖς συνθήκαις,
καὶ τᾶν αἰμυλᾶν ἀλωπέκων παυσαίμεθα.
ὦ δεῦρ᾽ ἴθι δεῦρ᾽ ὦ
κυναγὲ παρσένε. **Ἀθηναῖος**

ἄγε νυν ἐπειδὴ τἄλλα πεποίηται καλῶς,
ἀπάγεσθε ταύτας ὦ Λάκωνες, τάσδε τε
ὑμεῖς: ἀνὴρ δὲ παρὰ γυναῖκα καὶ γυνὴ
στήτω παρ᾽ ἄνδρα, κᾆτ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀγαθαῖς συμφοραῖς
ὀρχησάμενοι θεοῖσιν εὐλαβώμεθα
τὸ λοιπὸν αὖθις μὴ ‘ξαμαρτάνειν ἔτι. **Χορὸς Ἀθηναίων**

πρόσαγε χορόν, ἔπαγε δὲ Χάριτας,
ἐπὶ δὲ κάλεσον Ἄρτεμιν,
ἐπὶ δὲ δίδυμον ἀγέχορον
Ἰήιον
εὔφρον᾽, ἐπὶ δὲ Νύσιον,
ὃς μετὰ μαινάσι Βάκχιος ὄμμασι δαίεται,

Δία τε πυρὶ φλεγόμενον, ἐπί τε
πότνιαν ἄλοχον ὀλβίαν:
εἶτα δὲ δαίμονας, οἷς ἐπιμάρτυσι
χρησόμεθ᾽ οὐκ ἐπιλήσμοσιν
Ἡσυχίας πέρι τῆς ἀγανόφρονος,
ἣν ἐποίησε θεὰ Κύπρις.
ἀλαλαὶ ἰὴ παιήων:
αἴρεσθ᾽ ἄνω ἰαί,
ὡς ἐπὶ νίκῃ ἰαί.
εὐοῖ εὐοῖ, εὐαί εὐαί. **Ἀθηναῖος**

πρόφαινε δὴ σὺ Μοῦσαν ἐπὶ νέᾳ νέαν.

Χορὸς Λακεδαιμονίων

Ταΰγετον αὖτ᾽ ἐραννὸν ἐκλιπῶα
Μῶα μόλε Λάκαινα πρεπτὸν ἀμὶν
κλέωα τὸν Ἀμύκλαις σιὸν
καὶ χαλκίοικον Ἀσάναν,
Τυνδαρίδας τ᾽ ἀγασώς,
τοὶ δὴ πὰρ Εὐρώταν ψιάδδοντι.
εἶα μάλ᾽ ἔμβη
ὢ εἶα κοῦφα πάλλων,
ὡς Σπάρταν ὑμνίωμες,
τᾷ σιῶν χοροὶ μέλοντι
καὶ ποδῶν κτύπος,
ᾇ τε πῶλοι ταὶ κόραι
πὰρ τὸν Εὐρωταν
ἀμπάλλοντι πυκνὰ ποδοῖν
ἀγκονίωαι,
ταὶ δὲ κόμαι σείονθ᾽ ἇπερ Βακχᾶν
θυρσαδδωᾶν καὶ παιδδωᾶν.
ἀγεῖται δ᾽ ἁ Λήδας παῖς
ἀγνὰ χοραγὸς εὐπρεπής.
ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε κόμαν παραμπύκιδδε χερί, ποδοῖν τε πάδη
ᾇ τις ἔλαφος: κρότον δ᾽ ἀμᾷ ποίει χορωφελήταν.
καὶ τὰν σιὰν δ᾽ αὖ τὰν κρατίσταν Χαλκίοικον ὕμνει τὰν πάμμαχον.

THE WOMEN CELEBRATING THE THESMOPHORIA

Μνησίλοχος

ὦ Ζεῦ χελιδὼν ἆρά ποτε φανήσεται;
ἀπολεῖ μ᾽ ἀλοῶν ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἐωθινοῦ.
οἷόν τε, πρὶν τὸν σπλῆνα κομιδῇ μ᾽ ἐκβαλεῖν,
παρὰ σοῦ πυφέσθαι ποῖ μ᾽ ἄγεις ὠὖριπίδη;

Εὐριπίδης

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἀκούειν δεῖ σε πάνθ᾽ ὅσ᾽ αὐτίκα
ὄψει παρεστώς.

Μνησίλοχος
πῶς λέγεις; αὖθις φράσον.
οὐ δεῖ μ᾽ ἀκούειν;

Εὐριπίδης
οὐχ ἅ γ᾽ ἂν μέλλῃς ὁρᾶν.

Μνησίλοχος

οὐδ᾽ ἆρ᾽ ὁρᾶν δεῖ μ᾽;

Εὐριπίδης
οὐχ ἅ γ᾽ ἂν ἀκούειν δέῃ.

Μνησίλοχος

πῶς μοι παραινεῖς; δεξιῶς μέντοι λέγεις.
οὐ φῂς σὺ χρῆναί μ᾽ οὔτ᾽ ἀκούειν οὔθ᾽ ὁρᾶν;

Εὐριπίδης

χωρὶς γὰρ αὐτοῖν ἑκατέρου ‘στὶν ἡ φύσις.

Μνησίλοχος

τοῦ μήτ᾽ ἀκούειν μήθ᾽ ὁρᾶν;

Εὐριπίδης
εὖ ἴσθ᾽ ὅτι.

Μνησίλοχος

πῶς χωρίς;

Εὐριπίδης
οὕτω ταῦτα διεκρίθη τότε.
αἰθὴρ γὰρ ὅτε τὰ πρῶτα διεχωρίζετο
καὶ ζῷ᾽ ἐν αὐτῷ ξυνετέκνου κινούμενα,
ᾧ μὲν βλέπειν χρὴ πρῶτ᾽ ἐμηχανήσατο
ὀφθαλμὸν ἀντίμιμον ἡλίου τροχῷ,
ἀκοῇ δὲ χοάνην ὦτα διετετρήνατο.

Μνησίλοχος

διὰ τὴν χοάνην οὖν μήτ᾽ ἀκούω μήθ᾽ ὁρῶ;
νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἥδομαί γε τουτὶ προσμαθών.
οἷόν γέ που ‘στιν αἱ σοφαὶ ξυνουσίαι.

Εὐριπίδης

πόλλ᾽ ἂν μάθοις τοιαῦτα παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ.

Μνησίλοχος
πῶς ἂν οὖν
πρὸς τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς τούτοισιν ἐξεύροιμ᾽ ὅπως
ἔτι προσμάθοιμι χωλὸς εἶναι τὼ σκέλει;

Εὐριπίδης

βάδιζε δευρὶ καὶ πρόσεχε τὸν νοῦν.

Μνησίλοχος
ἰδού.

Εὐριπίδης

ὁρᾷς τὸ θύριον τοῦτο;

Μνησίλοχος
νὴ τὸν Ἡρακλέα
οἶμαί γε.

Εὐριπίδης
σίγα νυν.

Μνησίλοχος
σιωπῶ τὸ θύριον;

Εὐριπίδης

ἄκου᾽.

Μνησίλοχος
ἀκούω καὶ σιωπῶ τὸ θύριον;

Εὐριπίδης

ἐνταῦθ᾽ Ἀγάθων ὁ κλεινὸς οἰκῶν τυγχάνει
ὁ τραγῳδοποιός.

Μνησίλοχος
ποῖος οὗτος Ἀγάθων;

Εὐριπίδης

ἔστιν τις Ἀγάθων —

Μνησίλοχος
μῶν ὁ μέλας ὁ καρτερός;

Εὐριπίδης

οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερός τις: οὐχ ἑόρακας πώποτε;

Μνησίλοχος

μῶν ὁ δασυπώγων;

Εὐριπίδης
οὐχ ἑόρακας πώποτε;

Μνησίλοχος

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὔτοι γ᾽ ὥστε καί μέ γ᾽ εἰδέναι.

Εὐριπίδης

καὶ μὴν βεβίνηκας σύ γ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ οἶσθ᾽ ἴσως.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκποδὼν πτήξωμεν, ὡς ἐξέρχεται
θεράπων τις αὐτοῦ πῦρ ἔχων καὶ μυρρίνας:
προθυσόμενος ἔοικε τῆς ποιήσεως.

Θεράπων

εὔφημος πᾶς ἔστω λαός,
στόμα συγκλῄσας: ἐπιδημεῖ γὰρ
θίασος Μουσῶν ἔνδον μελάθρων
τῶν δεσποσύνων μελοποιῶν.
ἐχέτω δὲ πνοὰς νήνεμος αἰθήρ,
κῦμα δὲ πόντου μὴ κελαδείτω
γλαυκόν:

Μνησίλοχος
βομβάξ.

Εὐριπίδης
σίγα.

Μνησίλοχος
τι λέγει;

Θεράπων

πτηνῶν τε γένη κατακοιμάσθω,

θηρῶν τ᾽ ἀγρίων πόδες ὑλοδρόμων
μὴ λυέσθων.

Μνησίλοχος
βομβαλοβομβάξ.

Θεράπων

μέλλει γὰρ ὁ καλλιεπὴς Ἀγάθων
πρόμος ἡμέτερος —

Μνησίλοχος
μῶν βινεῖσθαι;

Θεράπων

τίς ὁ φωνήσας;

Μνησίλοχος
νήνεμος αἰθήρ.

Θεράπων

δρυόχους τιθέναι δράματος ἀρχάς.
κάμπτει δὲ νέας ἀψῖδας ἐπῶν,
τὰ δὲ τορνεύει, τὰ δὲ κολλομελεῖ,
καὶ γνωμοτυπεῖ κἀντονομάζει
καὶ κηροχυτεῖ καὶ γογγύλλει
καὶ χοανεύει.

Μνησίλοχος
καὶ λαικάζει.

Θεράπων

τίς ἀγροιώτας πελάθει θριγκοῖς;

Μνησίλοχος

ὃς ἕτοιμος σοῦ τοῦ τε ποιητοῦ

τοῦ καλλιεποῦς κατὰ τοῦ θριγκοῦ
συγγογγύλας καὶ συστρέψας
τουτὶ τὸ πέος χοανεῦσαι.

Θεράπων

ἦ που νέος γ᾽ ὢν ἦσθ᾽ ὑβριστὴς ὦ γέρον.

Εὐριπίδης

ὦ δαιμόνιε τοῦτον μὲν ἔα χαίρειν, σὺ δὲ
Ἀγάθωνά μοι δεῦρ᾽ ἐκκάλεσον πάσῃ τέχνῃ.

Θεράπων

μηδὲν ἱκέτευ᾽: αὐτὸς γὰρ ἕξεισιν τάχα.
καὶ γὰρ μελοποιεῖν ἄρχεται: χειμῶνος οὖν
ὄντος κατακάμπτειν τὰς στροφὰς οὐ ῥᾴδιον,
ἢν μὴ προίῃ θύρασι πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον.

Εὐριπίδης

τί οὖν ἐγὼ δρῶ;

Θεράπων
περίμεν᾽, ὡς ἐξέρχεται.

Εὐριπίδης

ὦ Ζεῦ τί δρᾶσαι διανοεῖ με τήμερον;

Μνησίλοχος

νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐγὼ πυθέσθαι βούλομαι
τί τὸ πρᾶγμα τουτί. τί στένεις; τί δυσφορεῖς;
οὐ χρῆν σε κρύπτειν ὄντα κηδεστὴν ἐμόν.

Εὐριπίδης

ἔστιν κακόν μοι μέγα τι προπεφυραμένον.

Μνησίλοχος

ποῖόν τι;

Εὐριπίδης
τῇδε θἠμέρᾳ κριθήσεται
εἴτ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἔτι ζῶν εἴτ᾽ ἀπόλωλ᾽ Εὐριπίδης.

Μνησίλοχος

καὶ πῶς; ἐπεὶ νῦν γ᾽ οὔτε τὰ δικαστήρια
μέλλει δικάζειν οὔτε βουλῆς ἐσθ᾽ ἕδρα,
ἐπεὶ τρίτη ‘στὶ Θεσμοφορίων ἡ μέση.

Εὐριπίδης

τοῦτ᾽ αὐτὸ γὰρ τοι κἀπολεῖν με προσδοκῶ.
αἱ γὰρ γυναῖκες ἐπιβεβουλεύκασί μοι
κἀν Θεσμοφόροιν μέλλουσι περί μου τήμερον
ἐκκλησιάζειν ἐπ᾽ ὀλέθρῳ.

Μνησίλοχος
τιὴ τί δή;

Εὐριπίδης

ὁτιὴ τραγῳδῶ καὶ κακῶς αὐτὰς λέγω.

Μνησίλοχος

νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ καὶ δίκαιά γ᾽ ἂν πάθοις.
ἀτὰρ τίν᾽ ἐκ τούτων σὺ μηχανὴν ἔχεις;

Εὐριπίδης

Ἀγάθωνα πεῖσαι τὸν τραγῳδοδιδάσκαλον
ἐς Θεσμοφόροιν ἐλθεῖν.

Μνησίλοχος
τί δράσοντ᾽; εἰπέ μοι.

Εὐριπίδης

ἐκκλησιάσοντ᾽ ἐν ταῖς γυναιξὶ κἂν δέῃ
λέξονθ᾽ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.

Μνησίλοχος
πότερα φανερῶς ἢ λάθρᾳ;

Εὐριπίδης

λάθρᾳ, στολὴν γυναικὸς ἠμφιεσμένον.

Μνησίλοχος

τὸ πρᾶγμα κομψὸν καὶ σφόδρ᾽ ἐκ τοῦ σοῦ τρόπου:
τοῦ γὰρ τεχνάζειν ἡμέτερος ὁ πυραμοῦς.

Εὐριπίδης

σίγα.

Μνησίλοχος
τί δ᾽ ἔστιν;

Εὐριπίδης
Ἀγάθων ἐξέρχεται.

Μνησίλοχος

καὶ ποῖός ἐστιν;

Εὐριπίδης
οὗτος οὐκκυκλούμενος.

Μνησίλοχος

ἀλλ᾽ ἢ τυφλὸς μέν εἰμ᾽: ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐχ ὁρῶ
ἄνδρ᾽ οὐδέν᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ ὄντα, Κυρήνην δ᾽ ὁρῶ.

Εὐριπίδης

σίγα: μελῳδεῖν γὰρ παρασκευάζεται.

Μνησίλοχος

μύρμηκος ἀτραπούς, ἢ τί διαμινύρεται;

Ἀγάθων

ἱερὰν χθονίαις δεξάμεναι
λαμπάδα κοῦραι ξὺν ἐλευθέρᾳ
πατρίδι χορεύσασθε βοάν.

Χορὸς Ἀγάθωνος

τίνι δαιμόνων ὁ κῶμος;
λέγε νυν. εὐπίστως δὲ τοὐμὸν
δαίμονας ἔχει σεβίσαι.

Ἀγάθων

ἄγε νυν ὄλβιζε Μοῦσα
χρυσέων ῥύτορα τόξων
Φοῖβον, ὃς ἱδρύσατο χώρας
γύαλα Σιμουντίδι γᾷ.

Χορὸς Ἀγάθωνος

χαῖρε καλλίστας ἀοιδᾶς
Φοῖβ᾽ ἐν εὐμούσοισι τιμαῖς
γέρας ἱερὸν προφέρων.

Ἀγάθων

τάν τ᾽ ἐν ὄρεσι δρυογόνοισι
κόραν ἀείσατ᾽
Ἄρτεμιν ἀγροτέραν.

Χορὸς Ἀγάθωνος

ἕπομαι κλήζουσα σεμνὸν

γόνον ὀλβίζουσα Λατοῦς
Ἄρτεμιν ἀπειρολεχῆ.

Ἀγάθων

Λατώ τε κρούματά τ᾽ Ἀσιάδος
ποδὶ †παράρυθμ᾽ εὔρυθμα Φρυγίων
διανεύματα Χαρίτων†.

Χορὸς Ἀγάθωνος

σέβομαι Λατώ τ᾽ ἄνασσαν
κίθαρίν τε ματέρ᾽ ὕμνων
ἄρσενι βοᾷ δόκιμον,
τᾷ φάος ἔσσυτο δαιμονίοις θεοῦ ὄμμασιν
ἀμετέρας τε δι᾽ αἰφνιδίου ὀπός. ὧν χάριν
ἄνακτ᾽ ἄγαλλε Φοῖβον τιμᾷ.
χαῖρ᾽ ὄλβιε παῖ Λατοῦς.

Μνησίλοχος

ὡς ἡδὺ τὸ μέλος ὦ πότνιαι Γενετυλλίδες
καὶ θηλυδριῶδες καὶ κατεγλωττισμένον
καὶ μανδαλωτόν, ὥστ᾽ ἐμοῦ γ᾽ ἀκροωμένου
ὑπὸ τὴν ἕδραν αὐτὴν ὑπῆλθε γάργαλος.
καί σ᾽ ὦ νεανίσχ᾽ ὅστις εἶ, κατ᾽ Αἰσχύλον
ἐκ τῆς Λυκουργείας ἐρέσθαι βούλομαι.
ποδαπὸς ὁ γύννις; τίς πάτρα; τίς ἡ στολή;
τίς ἡ τάραξις τοῦ βίου; τί βάρβιτος
λαλεῖ κροκωτῷ; τί δὲ λύρα κεκρυφάλῳ;
τί λήκυθος καὶ στρόφιον; ὡς οὐ ξύμφορον.
τίς δαὶ κατόπτρου καὶ ξίφους κοινωνία;
τίς δ᾽ αὐτὸς ὦ παῖ; πότερον ὡς ἀνὴρ τρέφει;
καὶ ποῦ πέος; ποῦ χλαῖνα; ποῦ Λακωνικαί;
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς γυνὴ δῆτ᾽: εἶτα ποῦ τὰ τιτθία;
τί φῄς; τί σιγᾷς; ἀλλὰ δῆτ᾽ ἐκ τοῦ μέλους
ζητῶ σ᾽, ἐπειδή γ᾽ αὐτὸς οὐ βούλει φράσαι;

Ἀγάθων

ὦ πρέσβυ πρέσβυ, τοῦ φθόνου μὲν τὸν ψόγον
ἤκουσα, τὴν δ᾽ ἄλγησιν οὐ παρεσχόμην:
ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν ἐσθῆθ᾽ ἅμα γνώμῃ φορῶ.
χρὴ γὰρ ποιητὴν ἄνδρα πρὸς τὰ δράματα
ἃ δεῖ ποιεῖν πρὸς ταῦτα τοὺς τρόπους ἔχειν.
αὐτίκα γυναικεῖ᾽ ἢν ποιῇ τις δράματα,
μετουσίαν δεῖ τῶν τρόπων τὸ σῶμ᾽ ἔχειν.

Μνησίλοχος

οὐκοῦν κελητίζεις, ὅταν Φαίδραν ποιῇς;

Ἀγάθων

ἀνδρεῖα δ᾽ ἢν ποιῇ τις, ἐν τῷ σώματι
ἔνεσθ᾽ ὑπάρχον τοῦθ᾽. ἃ δ᾽ οὐ κεκτήμεθα,
μίμησις ἤδη ταῦτα συνθηρεύεται.

Μνησίλοχος

ὅταν σατύρους τοίνυν ποιῇς, καλεῖν ἐμέ,
ἵνα συμποιῶ σοὔπισθεν ἐστυκὼς ἐγώ.

Ἀγάθων

ἄλλως τ᾽ ἄμουσόν ἐστι ποιητὴν ἰδεῖν
ἀγρεῖον ὄντα καὶ δασύν: σκέψαι δ᾽ ὅτι
Ἴβυκος ἐκεῖνος κἀνακρέων ὁ Τήιος
κἀλκαῖος, οἳ περὶ ἁρμονίαν ἐχύμισαν,
ἐμιτροφόρουν τε καὶ διεκλῶντ᾽ Ἰωνικῶς,
καὶ Φρύνιχος, τοῦτον γὰρ οὖν ἀκήκοας,
αὐτός τε καλὸς ἦν καὶ καλῶς ἠμπέσχετο:
διὰ τοῦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ κάλ᾽ ἦν τὰ δράματα.
ὅμοια γὰρ ποιεῖν ἀνάγκη τῇ φύσει.

Μνησίλοχος

ταῦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ὁ Φιλοκλέης αἰσχρὸς ὢν αἰσχρῶς ποιεῖ,
ὁ δ᾽ αὖ Ξενοκλέης ὢν κακὸς κακῶς ποιεῖ,
ὁ δ᾽ αὖ Θέογνις ψυχρὸς ὢν ψυχρῶς ποιεῖ.

Ἀγάθων

ἅπασ᾽ ἀνάγκη: ταῦτα γάρ τοι γνοὺς ἐγὼ
ἐμαυτὸν ἐθεράπευσα.

Μνησίλοχος
πῶς πρὸς τῶν θεῶν;

Εὐριπίδης

παῦσαι βαΰζων: καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ τοιοῦτος ἦν
ὢν τηλικοῦτος, ἡνίκ᾽ ἠρχόμην ποιεῖν.

Μνησίλοχος

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ ζηλῶ σε τῆς παιδεύσεως.

Εὐριπίδης

ἀλλ᾽ ὧνπερ οὕνεκ᾽ ἦλθον, ἔα μ᾽ εἰπεῖν.

Ἀγάθων
λέγε.

Εὐριπίδης

Ἀγάθων, σοφοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, ὅστις ἐν βραχεῖ
πολλοὺς καλῶς οἷός τε συντέμνειν λόγους.
ἐγὼ δὲ καινῇ ξυμφορᾷ πεπληγμένος
ἱκέτης ἀφῖγμαι πρὸς σέ.

Ἀγάθων
τοῦ χρείαν ἔχων;

Εὐριπίδης

μέλλουσί μ᾽ αἱ γυναῖκες ἀπολεῖν τήμερον
τοῖς Θεσμοφορίοις, ὅτι κακῶς αὐτὰς λέγω.

Ἀγάθων

τίς οὖν παρ᾽ ἡμῶν ἐστιν ὠφέλειά σοι;

Εὐριπίδης

ἡ πᾶσ᾽: ἐὰν γὰρ ἐγκαθεζόμενος λάθρᾳ
ἐν ταῖς γυναιξίν, ὡς δοκῶν εἶναι γυνή,
ὑπεραποκρίνῃ μου, σαφῶς σώσεις ἐμέ.
μόνος γὰρ ἂν λέξειας ἀξίως ἐμοῦ.

Ἀγάθων

ἔπειτα πῶς οὐκ αὐτὸς ἀπολογεῖ παρών;

Εὐριπίδης

ἐγὼ φράσω σοι. πρῶτα μὲν γιγνώσκομαι:
ἔπειτα πολιός εἰμι καὶ πώγων᾽ ἔχω,
σὺ δ᾽ εὐπρόσωπος λευκὸς ἐξυρημένος
γυναικόφωνος ἁπαλὸς εὐπρεπὴς ἰδεῖν.

Ἀγάθων

Εὐριπίδη —

Εὐριπίδης
τί ἔστιν;

Ἀγάθων
ἐποίησάς ποτε,
‘χαίρεις ὁρῶν φῶς, πατέρα δ᾽ οὐ χαίρειν δοκεῖς;’

Εὐριπίδης

ἔγωγε.

Ἀγάθων
μή νυν ἐλπίσῃς τὸ σὸν κακὸν
ἡμᾶς ὑφέξειν. καὶ γὰρ ἂν μαινοίμεθ᾽ ἄν.
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς ὅ γε σόν ἐστιν οἰκείως φέρε.
τὰς συμφορὰς γὰρ οὐχὶ τοῖς τεχνάσμασιν

φέρειν δίκαιον ἀλλὰ τοῖς παθήμασιν.

Μνησίλοχος

καὶ μὴν σύ γ᾽ ὦ κατάπυγον εὐρύπρωκτος εἶ
οὐ τοῖς λόγοισιν ἀλλὰ τοῖς παθήμασιν.

Εὐριπίδης

τί δ᾽ ἔστιν ὅτι δέδοικας ἐλθεῖν αὐτόσε;

Ἀγάθων

κάκιον ἀπολοίμην ἂν ἢ σύ.

Εὐριπίδης
πῶς;

Ἀγάθων
ὅπως;
δοκῶν γυναικῶν ἔργα νυκτερείσια
κλέπτειν ὑφαρπάζειν τε θήλειαν Κύπριν.

Μνησίλοχος

ἰδού γε κλέπτειν: νὴ Δία βινεῖσθαι μὲν οὖν.
ἀτὰρ ἡ πρόφασίς γε νὴ Δί᾽ εἰκότως ἔχει.

Εὐριπίδης

τί οὖν; ποιήσεις ταῦτα;

Ἀγάθων
μὴ δόκει γε σύ.

Εὐριπίδης

ὦ τρισκακοδαίμων ὡς ἀπόλωλ᾽ Εὐριπίδης.

Μνησίλοχος

ὦ φίλτατ᾽ ὦ κηδεστὰ μὴ σαυτὸν προδῷς.

Εὐριπίδης

πῶς οὖν ποιήσω δῆτα;

Μνησίλοχος
τοῦτον μὲν μακρὰ
κλάειν κέλευ᾽, ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ὅ τι βούλει χρῶ λαβών.

Εὐριπίδης

ἄγε νυν ἐπειδὴ σαυτὸν ἐπιδίδως ἐμοί,
ἀπόδυθι τουτὶ θοἰμάτιον.

Μνησίλοχος
καὶ δὴ χαμαί.
ἀτὰρ τί μέλλεις δρᾶν μ᾽;

Εὐριπίδης
ἀποξυρεῖν ταδί,
τὰ κάτω δ᾽ ἀφεύειν.

Μνησίλοχος
ἀλλὰ πρᾶττ᾽, εἴ σοι δοκεῖ.
ἢ μὴ᾽ πιδοῦν᾽ ἐμαυτὸν ὤφελόν ποτε.

Εὐριπίδης

Ἀγάθων σὺ μέντοι ξυροφορεῖς ἑκάστοτε,
χρῆσόν τί νυν ἡμῖν ξυρόν.

Ἀγάθων
αὐτὸς λάμβανε
ἐντεῦθεν ἐκ τῆς ξυροδόκης.

Εὐριπίδης
γενναῖος εἶ.
κάθιξε: φύσα τὴν γνάθον τὴν δεξιάν.

Μνησίλοχος

ὤμοι.

Εὐριπίδης
τί κέκραγας; ἐμβαλῶ σοι πάτταλον,
ἢν μὴ σιωπᾷς.

Μνησίλοχος
ἀτταταῖ ἰατταταῖ.

Εὐριπίδης

οὗτος σὺ ποῖ θεῖς;

Μνησίλοχος
ἐς τὸ τῶν σεμνῶν
θεῶν: οὐ γὰρ μὰ τὴν Δήμητρά γ᾽ ἐνταυθοῖ μενῶ
τεμνόμενος.

Εὐριπίδης
οὔκουν καταγέλαστος δῆτ᾽ ἔσει
τὴν ἡμίκραιραν τὴν ἑτέραν ψιλὴν ἔχων;

Μνησίλοχος

ὀλίγον μέλει μοι.

Εὐριπίδης
μηδαμῶς πρὸς τῶν θεῶν
προδῷς με: χώρει δεῦρο.

Μνησίλοχος
κακοδαίμων ἐγώ.

Εὐριπίδης

ἔχ᾽ ἀτρέμα σαυτὸν κἀνάκυπτε: ποῖ στρέφει;

Μνησίλοχος

μυμῦ.

Εὐριπίδης
τί μύξεις; πάντα πεποίηται καλῶς.

Μνησίλοχος

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ψιλὸς αὖ στρατεύσομαι.

Εὐριπίδης

μὴ φροντίσῃ: ὡς εὐπρεπὴς φανεῖ πάνυ.
βούλει θεᾶσθαι σαυτόν;

Μνησίλοχος
εἰ δοκεῖ, φέρε.

Εὐριπίδης

ὁρᾷς σεαυτόν;

Μνησίλοχος
οὐ μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ Κλεισθένη.

Εὐριπίδης

ἀνίστασ᾽, ἵν᾽ ἀφεύσω σε, κἀγκύψας ἔχε.

Μνησίλοχος

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων δελφάκιον γενήσομαι.

Εὐριπίδης

ἐνεγκάτω τις ἔνδοθεν δᾷδ᾽ ἢ λύχνον.
ἐπίκυπτε: τὴν κέρκον φυλάττου νυν ἄκραν.

Μνησίλοχος

ἐμοὶ μελήσει νὴ Δία, πλήν γ᾽ ὅτι κάομαι.

οἴμοι τάλας. ὕδωρ ὕδωρ ὦ γείτονες.
πρὶν ἀντιλαβέσθαι †πρωκτὸν τῆς φλογός.†

Εὐριπίδης

θάρρει.

Μνησίλοχος
τί θαρρῶ καταπεπυρπολημένος;

Εὐριπίδης

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔτ᾽ οἰδὲν πρᾶγμά σοι: τὰ πλεῖστα γὰρ
ἀποπεπόνηκας.

Μνησίλοχος
φῦ ἰοὺ τῆς ἀσβόλου.
αἰθὸς γεγένημαι πάντα τὰ περὶ τὴν τράμιν.

Εὐριπίδης

μὴ φροντίσῃς: ἕτερος γὰρ αὐτὰ σφογγιεῖ.

Μνησίλοχος

οἰμώξετἄρ᾽ εἴ τις τὸν ἐμὸν πρωκτὸν πλυνεῖ.

Εὐριπίδης

Ἀγάθων, ἐπειδὴ σαυτὸν ἐπιδοῦναι φθονεῖς,
ἀλλ᾽ ἱμάτιον γοῦν χρῆσον ἡμῖν τουτῳὶ
καὶ στρόφιον: οὐ γὰρ ταῦτά γ᾽ ὡς οὐκ ἔστ᾽ ἐρεῖς.

Ἀγάθων

λαμβάνετε καὶ χρῆσθ᾽: οὐ φθονῶ.

Μνησίλοχος
τί οὖν λάβω;

Ἀγάθων
ὅ τι; τὸν κροκωτὸν πρῶτον ἐνδύου λαβών.

Μνησίλοχος
νὴ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην ἡδύ γ᾽ ὄζει ποσθίου.
σύζωσον ἀνύσας. αἶρε νῦν στρόφιον.

Εὐριπίδης
ἰδού.

Μνησίλοχος

ἴθι νυν κατάστειλόν με τὰ περὶ τὼ σκέλει.

Εὐριπίδης

κεκρυφάλου δεῖ καὶ μίτρας.

Ἀγάθων
ἡδὶ μὲν οὖν
κεφαλὴ περίθετος, ἣν ἐγὼ νύκτωρ φορῶ.

Εὐριπίδης

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ κἀπιτηδεία πάνυ.

Μνησίλοχος

ἆρ᾽ ἁρμόσει μοι;

Εὐριπίδης
νὴ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἄριστ᾽ ἔχει.
φέρ᾽ ἔγκυκλον:

Ἀγάθων
τουτὶ λάβ᾽ ἀπὸ τῆς κλινίδος.

Εὐριπίδης

ὑποδημάτων δεῖ.

Ἀγάθων
τἀμὰ ταυτὶ λάμβανε.

Μνησίλοχος

ἆρ᾽ ἁρμόσει μοι;

Εὐριπίδης
χαλαρὰ γοῦν χαίρεις φορῶν.

Ἀγάθων
σὺ τοῦτο γίγνωσκ᾽: ἀλλ᾽ ἔχεις γὰρ ὧν δέει,
εἴσω τις ὡς τάχιστά μ᾽ ἐσκυκλησάτω.

Εὐριπίδης

ἀνὴρ μὲν ἡμῖν οὑτοσὶ καὶ δὴ γυνὴ
τό γ᾽ εἶδος: ἢν λαλῇς δ᾽, ὅπως τῷ φθέγματι
γυναικιεῖς εὖ καὶ πιθανῶς.

Μνησίλοχος
πειράσομαι.

Εὐριπίδης

βάδιζε τοίνυν.

Μνησίλοχος
μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω οὔκ, ἢν γε μὴ
ὀμόσῃς ἐμοί —

Εὐριπίδης
τί χρῆμα;

Μνησίλοχος
συσσώσειν ἐμὲ
πάσαις τέχναις, ἢν μοί τι περιπίπτῃ κακόν.

Εὐριπίδης

ὄμνυμι τοίνυν αἰθέρ᾽ οἴκησιν Διός.

Μνησίλοχος

τί μᾶλλον ἢ τὴν Ἱπποκράτους ξυνοικίαν;

Εὐριπίδης

ὄμνυμι τοίνυν πάντας ἄρδην τοὺς θεούς.

Μνησίλοχος

μέμνησο τοίνυν ταῦθ᾽, ὅτι ἡ φρὴν ὤμοσεν,
ἡ γλῶττα δ᾽ οὐκ ὀμώμοκ᾽: οὐδ᾽ ὥρκωσ᾽ ἐγώ.

Εὐριπίδης

ἔκσπευδε ταχέως: ὡς τὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας
σημεῖον ἐν τῷ Θεσμοφορείῳ φαίνεται.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἄπειμι.

Μνησίλοχος
δεῦρό νυν ὦ Θρᾷτθ᾽ ἔπου.
ὦ Θρᾷττα θέασαι, καομένων τῶν λαμπάδων
ὅσον τὸ χρῆμ᾽ ἀνέρχεθ᾽ ὑπὸ τῆς λιγνύος.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ περικαλλεῖ Θεσμοφόρῳ δέξασθέ με
ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ καὶ δεῦρο καὶ πάλιν οἴκαδε.
ὦ Θρᾷττα τὴν κίστην κάθελε, κᾆτ᾽ ἔξελε
τὸ πόπανον, ὅπως λαβοῦσα θύσω τοῖν θεοῖν.
δέσποινα πολυτίμητε Δήμητερ φίλη
καὶ Φερρέφαττα, πολλὰ πολλάκις μέ σοι
θύειν ἔχουσαν, εἰ δὲ μἀλλὰ νῦν λαθεῖν.
καὶ τοῦ θυγατρίου χοῖρον ἀνδρός μοι τυχεῖν
πλουτοῦντος, ἄλλως δ᾽ ἠλιθίου κἀβελτέρου,
καὶ ποσθαλίσκον νοῦν ἔχειν μοι καὶ φρένας.
ποῦ ποῦ καθίζωμ᾽ ἐν καλῷ, τῶν ῥητόρων
ἵν᾽ ἐξακούω; σὺ δ᾽ ἄπιθ᾽ ὦ Θρᾷττ᾽ ἐκποδών.
δούλοις γὰρ οὐκ ἔξεστ᾽ ἀκούειν τῶν λόγων.

Κηρύκαινα

εὐφημία ‘στω, εὐφημία ‘στω. εὔχεσθε τοῖν Θεσμοφόροιν τῇ Δήμητρι καὶ τῇ Κόρῃ καὶ τῷ Πλούτῳ καὶ τῇ Καλλιγενείᾳ καὶ τῇ Κουροτρόφῳ τῇ Γῇ καὶ τῷ Ἑρμῇ καὶ Χάρισιν ἐκκλησίαν τήνδε καὶ σύνοδον τὴν νῦν κάλλιστα καὶ ἄριστα ποιῆσαι, πολυωφελῶς μὲν πόλει τῇ Ἀθηναίων τυχηρῶς δ᾽ ἡμῖν αὐταῖς. καὶ τὴν δρῶσαν τήν τ᾽ ἀγορεύουσαν τὰ βέλτιστα περὶ τὸν δῆμον τὸν Ἀθηναίων καὶ τὸν τῶν γυναικῶν ταύτην νικᾶν. ταῦτ᾽ εὔχεσθε, καὶ ὑμῖν αὐταῖς τἀγαθά. ἰὴ παιὼν ἰὴ παιών. χαίρωμεν. **Χορός**

δεχόμεθα καὶ θεῶν γένος
λιτόμεθα ταῖσδ᾽ ἐπ᾽ εὐχαῖς
φανέντας ἐπιχαρῆναι.
Ζεῦ μεγαλώνυμε χρυσολύρα τε
Δῆλον ὃς ἔχεις ἱεράν,
καὶ σὺ παγκρατὲς κόρα γλαυκῶπι
χρυσόλογχε πόλιν οἰκοῦσα
περιμάχητον, ἐλθὲ δεῦρο.
καὶ πολυώνυμε θηροφόνη παῖ
Λατοῦς χρυσώπιδος ἔρνος,
σύ τε πόντιε σεμνὲ Πόσειδον
ἁλιμέδον προλιπὼν
μυχὸν ἰχθυόεντ᾽ οἰστροδόνητον,
Νηρέος ἐναλίου τε κόραι
Νύμφαι τ᾽ ὀρείπλαγκτοι.
χρυσέα τε φόρμιγξ
ἰαχήσειεν ἐπ᾽ εὐχαῖς
ἡμετέραις: τελέως δ᾽
ἐκκλησιάσαιμεν Ἀθηναίων
εὐγενεῖς γυναῖκες. **Κηρύκαινα**

εὔχεσθε τοῖς θεοῖσι τοῖς Ὀλυμπίοις
καὶ ταῖς Ὀλυμπίαισι καὶ τοῖς Πυθίοις
καὶ ταῖσι Πυθίαισι καὶ τοῖς Δηλίοις
καὶ ταῖσι Δηλίαισι τοῖς τ᾽ ἄλλοις θεοῖς,
εἴ τις ἐπιβουλεύει τι τῷ δήμῳ κακὸν
τῷ τῶν γυναικῶν ἢ ‘πικηρυκεύεται

Εὐριπίδῃ Μήδοις τ᾽ ἐπὶ βλάβῃ τινὶ
τῇ τῶν γυναικῶν, ἢ τυραννεῖν ἐπινοεῖ
ἢ τὸν τύραννον συγκατάγειν, ἢ παιδίον
ὑποβαλλομένης κατεῖπεν, ἢ δούλη τινὸς
προαγωγὸς οὖσ᾽ ἐνετρύλλισεν τῷ δεσπότῃ
ἢ πεμπομένη τις ἀγγελίας ψευδεῖς φέρει,
ἢ μοιχὸς εἴ τις ἐξαπατᾷ ψευδῆ λέγων
καὶ μὴ δίδωσιν ἂν ὑπόσχηταί ποτε,
ἢ δῶρά τις δίδωσι μοιχῷ γραῦς γυνή,
ἢ καὶ δέχεται προδιδοῦσ᾽ ἑταίρα τὸν φίλον,
κεἴ τις κάπηλος ἢ καπηλὶς τοῦ χοῶς
ἢ τῶν κοτυλῶν τὸ νόμισμα διαλυμαίνεται,
κακῶς ἀπολέσθαι τοῦτον αὐτὸν κᾠκίαν
ἀρᾶσθε, ταῖς δ᾽ ἄλλαισιν ὑμῖν τοὺς θεοὺς
εὔχεσθε πάσαις πολλὰ δοῦναι κἀγαθά. **Χορός**

ξυνευχόμεσθα τέλεα μὲν
πόλει τέλεα δὲ δήμῳ
τάδ᾽ εὔγματα γενέσθαι,
τὰ δ᾽ ἄρισθ᾽ ὅσαις προσήκει
νικᾶν λεγούσαις: ὁπόσαι δ᾽
ἐξαπατῶσιν παραβαίνουσί τε τοὺς
ὅρκους τοὺς νενομισμένους
κερδῶν οὕνεκ᾽ ἐπὶ βλάβῃ,
ἢ ψηφίσματα καὶ νόμον
ζητοῦσ᾽ ἀντιμεθιστάναι,
τἀπόρρητά τε τοῖσιν ἐχθροῖς
τοῖς ἡμετέροις λέγουσ᾽,
ἢ Μήδους ἐπάγουσι γῇ
κερδῶν οὕνεκ᾽ ἐπὶ βλάβῃ,
ἀσεβοῦσιν ἀδικοῦσίν τε τὴν πόλιν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ παγκρατὲς
Ζεῦ ταῦτα κυρώσειας, ὥσθ᾽
ἡμῖν θεοὺς παραστατεῖν
καίπερ γυναιξὶν οὔσαις. **Κηρύκαινα**

ἄκουε πᾶς. ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ τάδε
τῇ τῶν γυναικῶν: Τιμόκλει᾽ ἐπεστάτει,
Λύσιλλ᾽ ἐγραμμάτευεν, εἶπε Ζωστράτη:

ἐκκλησίαν ποιεῖν ἔωθεν τῇ μέσῃ
τῶν Θεσμοφορίων, ᾗ μάλισθ᾽ ἡμῖν σχολή,
καὶ χρηματίζειν πρῶτα περὶ Εὐριπίδου,
ὅ τι χρὴ παθεῖν ἐκεῖνον: ἀδικεῖν γὰρ δοκεῖ
ἡμῖν ἁπάσαις. τίς ἀγορεύειν βούλεται;

Γυνὴ Α

ἐγώ.

Κηρύκαινα
περίθου νυν τόνδε πρῶτον πρὶν λέγειν.

Χορός

σίγα σιώπα, πρόσεχε τὸν νοῦν: χρέμπτεται γὰρ ἤδη
ὅπερ ποιοῦσ᾽ οἱ ῥήτορες. μακρὰν ἔοικε λέξειν.

Γυνὴ Α

φιλοτιμίᾳ μὲν οὐδεμιᾷ μὰ τὼ θεὼ
λέξουσ᾽ ἀνέστην ὦ γυναῖκες: ἀλλὰ γὰρ
βαρέως φέρω τάλαινα πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον
προπηλακιζομένας ὁρῶς ἡμᾶς ὑπὸ
Εὐριπίδου τοῦ τῆς λαχανοπωλητρίας
καὶ πολλὰ καὶ παντοῖ᾽ ἀκουούσας κακά.
τί γὰρ οὗτος ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἐπισμῇ τῶν κακῶν;
ποῦ δ᾽ οὐχὶ διαβέβληχ᾽, ὅπουπερ ἔμβραχυ
εἰσὶν θεαταὶ καὶ τραγῳδοὶ καὶ χοροί,
τὰς μοιχοτρόπους, τὰς ἀνδρεραστίας καλῶν,
τὰς οἰνοπότιδας, τὰς προδότιδας, τὰς λάλους,
τὰς οὐδὲν ὑγιές, τὰς μέγ᾽ ἀνδράσιν κακόν:
ὥστ᾽ εὐθὺς εἰσιόντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἰκρίων
ὑποβλέπουσ᾽ ἡμᾶς σκοποῦνταί τ᾽ εὐθέως
μὴ μοιχὸς ἔνδον ᾖ τις ἀποκεκρυμμένος.
δρᾶσαι δ᾽ ἔθ᾽ ἡμῖν οὐδὲν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ
ἔξεστι: τοιαῦθ᾽ οὗτος ἐδίδαξεν κακὰ
τοὺς ἄνδρας ἡμῶν: ὥστ᾽ ἐάνπερ τις πλέκῃ
γυνὴ στέφανον, ἐρᾶν δοκεῖ: κἂν ἐκβάλῃ

σκεῦός τι κατὰ τὴν οἰκίαν πλανωμένη,
ἀνὴρ ἐρωτᾷ, ‘τῷ κατέαγεν ἡ χύτρα;
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως οὐ τῷ Κορινθίῳ ξένῳ.’
κάμνει κόρη τις, εὐθὺς ἀδελφὸς λέγει,
‘τὸ χρῶμα τοῦτό μ᾽ οὐκ ἀρέσκει τῆς κόρης.’
εἶεν, γυνή τις ὑποβαλέσθαι βούλεται
ἀποροῦσα παίδων, οὐδὲ τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν λαθεῖν.
ἄνδρες γὰρ ἤδη παρακάθηνται πλησίον:
πρὸς τοὺς γέροντάς θ᾽ οἳ πρὸ τοῦ τὰς μείρακας
ἤγοντο, διαβέβληκεν, ὥστ᾽ οὐδεὶς γέρων
γαμεῖν ἐθέλει γυναῖκα διὰ τοὔπος τοδὶ
‘δέσποινα γὰρ γέροντι νυμφίῳ γυνή.’
εἶτα διὰ τοῦτον ταῖς γυναικωνίτισιν
σφραγῖδας ἐπιβάλλουσιν ἤδη καὶ μοχλοὺς
τηροῦντες ἡμᾶς, καὶ προσέτι Μολοττικοὺς
τρέφουσι μορμολυκεῖα τοῖς μοιχοῖς κύνας.
καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ξυγγνώσθ᾽. ἃ δ᾽ ἦν ἡμῖν πρὸ τοῦ
αὐταῖς ταμιεῦσαι καὶ προαιρούσαις λαθεῖν
ἄλφιτον ἔλαιον οἶνον, οὐδὲ ταῦτ᾽ ἔτι
ἔξεστιν. οἱ γὰρ ἄνδρες ἤδη κλῄδια
αὐτοὶ φοροῦσι κρυπτὰ κακοηθέστατα
Λακωνίκ᾽ ἄττα, τρεῖς ἔχοντα γομφίους.
πρὸ τοῦ μὲν οὖν ἦν ἀλλ᾽ ὑποῖξαι τὴν θύραν
ποιησαμέναισι δακτύλιον τριωβόλου,
νῦν δ᾽ οὗτος αὐτοὺς ᾧκότριψ Εὐριπίδης
ἐδίδαξε θριπήδεστ᾽ ἔχειν σφραγίδια
ἐξαψαμένους. νῦν οὖν ἐμοὶ τούτῳ δοκεῖ
ὅλεθρόν τιν᾽ ἡμᾶς κυρκανᾶν ἀμωσγέπως,
ἢ φαρμάκοισιν ἢ μιᾷ γέ τῳ τέχνῃ,
ὅπως ἀπολεῖται. ταῦτ᾽ ἐγὼ φανερῶς λέγω,
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα μετὰ τῆς γραμματέως συγγράψομαι.

Χορός

οὔπω ταύτης ἤκουσα
πολυπλοκωτέρας γυναικὸς
οὐδὲ δεινότερον λεγούσης.
πάντα γὰρ λέγει δίκαια,
†πάσας δ᾽ ἰδέας ἐξήτασεν,

πάντα δ᾽ ἐβάστασεν φρενὶ πυκνῶς τε†
ποικίλους λόγους ἀνηῦρεν
εὖ διεζητημένους:
ὥστ᾽ ἂν εἰ λέγοι παρ᾽ αὐτὴν
Ξενοκλέης ὁ Καρκίνου, δοκεῖν
ἂν αὐτόν, ὡς ἐγῷμαι,
πᾶσιν ὑμῖν
ἄντικρυς μηδὲν λέγειν. **Γυνὴ Β**

ὀλίγων ἕνεκα καὐτὴ παρῆλθον ῥημάτων.
τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλ᾽ αὕτη κατηγόρηκεν εὖ:
ἃ δ᾽ ἐγὼ πέπονθα, ταῦτα λέξαι βούλομαι.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἀπέθανεν μὲν ἐν Κύπρῳ
παιδάρια πέντε καταλιπών, ἀγὼ μόλις
στεφανηπλοκοῦσ᾽ ἔβοσκον ἐν ταῖς μυρρίναις.
τέως μὲν οὖν ἀλλ᾽ ἡμικάκως ἐβοσκόμην:
νῦν δ᾽ οὗτος ἐν ταῖσιν τραγῳδίαις ποιῶν
τοὺς ἄνδρας ἀναπέπεικεν οὐκ εἶναι θεούς:
ὥστ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ἐμπολῶμεν οὐδ᾽ εἰς ἥμισυ.
νῦν οὖν ἁπάσαισιν παραινῶ καὶ λέγω
τοῦτον κολάσαι τὸν ἄνδρα πολλῶν οὕνεκα:
ἄγρια γὰρ ἡμᾶς ὦ γυναῖκες δρᾷ κακά,
ἅτ᾽ ἐν ἀγρίοισι τοῖς λαχάνοις αὐτὸς τραφείς.
ἀλλ᾽ εἰς ἀγορὰν ἅπειμι: δεῖ γὰρ ἀνδράσιν
πλέξαι στεφάνους συνθηματιαίους εἴκοσιν. **Χορός**

ἕτερον αὖ τι λῆμα τοῦτο
κομψότερον ἔτ᾽ ἢ τὸ πρότερον
ἀναπέφηνεν.
οἷα κατεστωμύλατο
οὐκ ἄκαιρα, φρένας ἔχουσα
καὶ πολύπλοκον νόημ᾽, οὐδ᾽
ἀσύνετ᾽ ἀλλὰ πιθανὰ πάντα.
δεῖ δὲ ταύτης τῆς ὕβρεως ἡμῖν
τὸν ἄνδρα
περιφανῶς δοῦναι δίκην. **Μνησίλοχος**

τὸ μὲν ὦ γυναῖκες ὀξυθυμεῖσθαι σφόδρα
Εὐριπίδῃ, τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀκουούσας κακά,

οὐ θαυμάσιόν ἐστ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ἐπιζεῖν τὴν χολήν.
καὐτὴ γὰρ ἔγωγ᾽, οὕτως ὀναίμην τῶν τέκνων,
μισῶ τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἐκεῖνον, εἰ μὴ μαίνομαι.
ὅμως δ᾽ ἐν ἀλλήλαισι χρὴ δοῦναι λόγον:
αὐταὶ γάρ ἐσμεν, κοὐδεμί᾽ ἔκφορος λόγου.
τί ταῦτ᾽ ἔχουσαι ‘κεῖνον αἰτιώμεθα
βαρέως τε φέρομεν, εἰ δύ᾽ ἡμῶν ἢ τρία
κακὰ ξυνειδὼς εἶπε δρώσας μυρία;
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὴ πρῶτον, ἵνα μἄλλην λέγω,
ξύνοιδ᾽ ἐμαυτῇ πολλὰ δείν᾽: ἐκεῖνο δ᾽ οὖν
δεινότατον, ὅτε νύμφη μὲν ἦν τρεῖς ἡμέρας,
ὁ δ᾽ ἀνὴρ παρ᾽ ἐμοὶ καθηῦδεν: ἦν δέ μοι φίλος,
ὅσπερ με διεκόρησεν οὖσαν ἑπτέτιν.
οὗτος πόθῳ μου ‘κνυεν ἐλθὼν τὴν θύραν:
κᾆτ᾽ εὐφὺς ἔγνων: εἶτα καταβαίνω λάθρᾳ.
ὁ δ᾽ ἀνὴρ ἐρωτᾷ ‘ποῖ σὺ καταβαίνεις’; ‘ὅποι;
στρόφος μ᾽ ἔχει τὴν γαστέρ ὥνερ κὠδύνη:
ἐς τὸν κοπρῶν᾽ οὖν ἔρχομαι.’ ‘βάδιζέ νυν:’
κᾆθ᾽ ὁ μὲν ἔτριβε κεδρίδας ἄννηθον σφάκον:
ἐγὼ δὲ καταχέασα τοῦ στροφέως ὕδωρ
ἐξῆλθον ὡς τὸν μοιχόν: εἶτ᾽ ἠρειδόμην
παρὰ τὸν Ἀγυιᾶ κύβδ᾽ ἐχομένη τῆς δάφνης.
ταῦτ᾽ οὐδεπώποτ᾽ εἶφ᾽, ὁρᾶτ᾽, Εὐριπίδης:
οὐδ᾽ ὡς ὑπὸ τῶν δούλων τε κὠρεωκόμων
σποδούμεθ᾽, ἢν μὴ ‘χωμεν ἕτερον, οὐ λέγει:
οὐδ᾽ ὡς ὅταν μάλισθ᾽ ὑπό του ληκώμεθα
τὴν νύχθ᾽, ἕωθεν σκόροδα διαμασώμεθα,
ἵν᾽ ὀσφρόμενος ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ τείχους εἰσιὼν
μηδὲν κακὸν δρᾶν ὑποτοπῆται. ταῦθ᾽, ὁρᾷς,
οὐπώποτ᾽ εἶπεν. εἰ δὲ Φαίδραν λοιδορεῖ,
ἡμῖν τί τοῦτ᾽ ἔστ᾽; οὐδ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ εἴρηκέ πω,
ὡς ἡ γυνὴ δεικνῦσα τἀνδρὶ τοὔγκυκλον
†ὑπ᾽ αὐγὰς † οἷόν ἐστιν, ἐγκεκαλυμμένον
τὸν μοιχὸν ἐξέπεμψεν, οὐκ εἴρηκέ πω.
ἑτέραν δ᾽ ἐγᾦδ᾽ ἣ ‘φασκεν ὠδίνειν γυνὴ
δέχ᾽ ἡμέρας, ἕως ἐπρίατο παιδίον:
ὁ δ᾽ ἀνὴρ περιέτρεχ᾽ ὠκυτόκι᾽ ὠνούμενος:
τὸ δ᾽ εἰσέφερε γραῦς ἐν χύτρᾳ τὸ παιδίον,
ἵνα μὴ βό η, κηρίῳ βεβυσμένον:

εἶθ᾽ ὡς ἔνευσεν ἡ φέρουσ᾽, εὐθὺς βοᾷ,
‘ἄπελθ᾽ ἄπελθ᾽, ἤδη γὰρ ὧνέρ μοι δοκῶ
τέξειν.’ τὸ γὰρ ἦτρον τῆς χύτρας ἐλάκτισεν:
χὠ μὲν γεγηθὼς ἔτρεχεν, ἡ δ᾽ ἐξέσπασεν
ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ παιδίου, τὸ δ᾽ ἀνέκραγεν.
εἶθ᾽ ἡ μιαρὰ γραῦς, ἢ ‘φερεν τὸ παιδίον,
θεῖ μειδιῶσα πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ λέγει,
‘λέων λέων σοι γέγονεν, αὖτ᾽ ἔκμαγμα σόν,
τά τ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἀπαξάπαντα καὶ τὸ πόσθιον
τῷ σῷ προσόμοιον, στρεβλὸν ὥσπερ κύτταρον.’
ταῦτ᾽ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὰ κακά; νὴ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν
ἡμεῖς γε. κᾆτ᾽ Εὐριπίδῃ θυμούμεθα,
οὐδὲν παθοῦσαι μεῖζον ἢ δεδράκαμεν; **Χορός**

τουτὶ μέντοι θαυμαστόν,
ὁπόθεν ηὑρέθη τὸ χρῆμα,
χἤτις ἐξέθρεψε χώρα
τήνδε τὴν θρασεῖαν οὕτω.
τάδε γὰρ εἰπεῖν τὴν πανοῦργον
κατὰ τὸ φανερὸν ὦδ᾽ ἀναιδῶς
οὐκ ἂν ᾠόμην ἐν ἡμῖν
οὐδὲ τολμῆσαί ποτ᾽ ἄν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἅπαν γένοιτ᾽ ἂν ἤδη:
τὴν παροιμίαν δ᾽ ἐπαινῶ
τὴν παλαιάν: ὑπὸ λίθῳ γὰρ
παντί νου χρὴ
μὴ δάκῃ ῥητωρ ἀθρεῖν. **Χορός**

ἀλλ᾽ οὐ γάρ ἐστι τῶν ἀναισχύτων φύσει γυναικῶν
οὐδὲν κάκιον εἰς ἅπαντα πλὴν ἄρ᾽ εἰ γυναῖκες. **Γυνὴ Α**

οὔ τοι μὰ τὴν Ἄγλαυρον ὦ γυναῖκες εὖ φρονεῖτε,
ἀλλ᾽ ἢ πεφάρμαχθ᾽ ἢ κακόν τι μέγα πεπόνθατ᾽ ἄλλο,
ταύτην ἐῶσαι τὴν φθόρον τοιαῦτα περιυβρίζειν
ἡμᾶς ἁπάσας. εἰ μὲν οἶν τις ἔστιν: εἰ δὲ μή, ἡμεῖς
αὐταί τε καὶ τὰ δουλάρια τέφραν ποθὲν λαβοῦσαι
ταύτης ἀποψιλώσομεν τὸν χοῖρον, ἵνα διδαχθῇ
γυνὴ γυναῖκας οὖσα μὴ κακῶς λέγειν τὸ λοιπόν.

Μνησίλοχος

μὴ δῆτα τόν γε χοῖρον ὦ γυναῖκες. εἰ γὰρ οὔσης
παρρησίας κἀξὸν λέγειν ὅσαι πάρεσμεν ἀσταί,
εἶτ᾽ εἶπον ἀγίγνωσκον ὑπὲρ Εὐριπίδου δίκαια,
διὰ τοῦτο τιλλομένην με δεῖ δοῦναι δίκην ὑφ᾽ ὑμῶν;

Γυνὴ Α

οὐ γάρ σε δεῖ δοῦναι δίκην; ἥτις μόνη τέτληκας
ὑπὲρ ἀνδρὸς ἀντειπεῖν, ὃς ἡμᾶς πολλὰ κακὰ δέδρακεν
ἐπίτηδες εὑρίσκων λόγους, ὅπου γυνὴ πονηρὰ
ἐγένετο, Μελανίππας ποιῶν Φαίδρας τε: Πηνελόπην δὲ
οὐπώποτ᾽ ἐποίησ᾽, ὅτι γυνὴ σώφρων ἔδοξεν εἶναι.

Μνησίλοχος

ἐγὼ γὰρ οἶδα ταῖτιον. Μίαν γὰρ οὐκ ἂν εἴποις
τῶν νῦν γυναικῶν Πηνελόπην, Παίδρας δ᾽ ἁπαξαπάσας.

Γυνὴ Α

ἀκούετ᾽ ὦ γυναῖκες οἷ᾽ εἴρηκεν ἡ πανοῦργος
ἡμᾶς ἁπάσας αὖθις αὖ.

Μνησίλοχος
καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ οὐδέπω γε
εἴρηχ᾽ ὅσα ξύνοιδ᾽: ἐπεὶ βούλεσθε πλείον᾽ εἴπω;

Γυνὴ Α

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἂν ἔτ᾽ ἔχοις: ὅσα γὰρ ᾔδησθ᾽ ἐξέχεας ἅπαντα.

Μνησίλοχος

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐδέπω τὴν μυριοστὴν μοῖραν ὧν ποιοῦμεν.
ἐπεὶ τάδ᾽ οὐκ εἴρηχ᾽, ὁρᾷς, ὡς στλεγγίδας λαβοῦσαι
ἔπειτα σιφωνίζομεν τὸν οἶνον.

Γυνὴ Α

ἐπιτριβείης.

Μνησίλοχος

ὥς τ᾽ αὖ τὰ κρέ᾽ ἐξ Ἀπατουρίων ταῖς μαστροποῖς διδοῦσαι
ἔπειτα τὴν γαλῆν φαμεν —

Γυνὴ Α
τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ: φλυαρεῖς.

Μνησίλοχος

560 οὐδ᾽ ὡς τὸν ἄνδρα τῷ πελέκει γυνὴ κατεσπόδησεν,
οὐκ εἶπον: οὐδ᾽ ὡς φαρμάκοις ἑτέρα τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἔμηνεν,
οὐδ᾽ ὡς ὑπὸ τῇ πυέλῳ κατώρυξέν ποτ᾽ —

Γυνὴ Α
ἐξόλοιο.

Μνησίλοχος

ἀχαρνικὴ τὸν πατέρα.

Γυνὴ Α
ταυτὶ δῆτ᾽ ἀνέκτ᾽ ἀκούειν;

Μνησίλοχος

565 οὐδ᾽ ὡς σὺ τῆς δούλης τεκούσης ἄρρεν εἶτα σαυτῇ
τοῦθ᾽ ὑπεβάλου, τὸ σὸν δὲ θυγάτριον παρῆκας αὐτῇ.

Γυνὴ Α

οὔ τοι μὰ τὼ θεὼ σὺ καταπροίξει λέγουσα ταυτί,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκποκιῶ σου τὰς ποκάδας.

Μνησίλοχος
οὐ δὴ μὰ Δία σύ γ᾽ ἅψει.

Γυνὴ Α

καὶ μὴν ἰδού.

Μνησίλοχος
καὶ μὴν ἰδού.

Γυνὴ Α
λαβὲ θοἰμάτιον Φιλίστη.

Μνησίλοχος

πρόσθες μόνον, κἀγώ σε νὴ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν —

Γυνὴ Α
τί δράσεις;

Μνησίλοχος

τὸν σησαμοῦνθ᾽ ὃν κατέφαγες, τοῦτον χεσεῖν ποιήσω.

Χορός

παύσασθε λοιδορούμεναι: καὶ γὰρ γυνή τις ἡμῖν
ἐσπουδακυῖα προστρέχει. πρὶν οὖν ὁμοῦ γενέσθαι,
σιγᾶθ᾽, ἵν᾽ αὐτῆς κοσμίως πυθώμεθ᾽ ἅττα λέξει.

Κλεισθένης

φίλαι γυναῖκες ξυγγενεῖς τοὐμοῦ τρόπου:
ὅτι μὲν φίλος εἴμ᾽ ὑμῖν, ἐπίδηλος ταῖς γνάθοις:
γυναικομανῶ γὰρ προξενῶ θ᾽ ὑμῶν ἀεί.
καὶ νῦν ἀκούσας πρᾶγμα περὶ ὑμῶν μέγα
ὀλίγῳ τι πρότερον κατ᾽ ἀγορὰν λαλούμενον,
ἥκω φράσων τοῦτ᾽ ἀγγελῶν θ᾽ ὑμῖν, ἵνα
σκοπῆτε καὶ τηρῆτε μὴ καὶ προσπέσῃ
ὑμῖν ἀφάρκτοις πρᾶγμα δεινὸν καὶ μέγα.

Χορός

τί δ᾽ ἔστιν ὦ παῖ; παῖδα γάρ σ᾽ εἰκὸς καλεῖν,
ἕως ἂν οὕτως τὰς γνάθους ψιλὰς ἔχῃς.

Κλεισθένης

Εὐριπίδην φάσ᾽ ἄνδρα κηδεστήν τινα
αὐτοῦ γέροντα δεῦρ᾽ ἀναπέμψαι τήμερον.

Χορός

πρὸς ποῖον ἔργον ἢ τίνος γνώμης χάριν;

Κλεισθένης

ἵν᾽ ἅττα βουλεύοισθε καὶ μέλλοιτε δρᾶν,
ἐκεῖνος εἴη τῶν λόγων κατάσκοπος.

Χορός

καὶ πῶς λέληθεν ἐν γυναιξὶν ὢν ἀνήρ;

Κλεισθένης

ἀφηῦσεν αὐτὸν κἀπέτιλ᾽ Εὐριπίδης
καὶ τἄλλ᾽ ἅπανθ᾽ ὥσπερ γυναῖκ᾽ ἐσκεύασεν.

Μνησίλοχος

πείθεσθε τούτῳ ταῦτα; τίς δ᾽ οὕτως ἀνὴρ
ἠλίθιος ὅστις τιλλόμενος ἠνείχετο;
οὐκ οἴομαι ‘γωγ᾽ ᾧ πολυτιμήτω θεώ.

Κλεισθένης

ληρεῖς: ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ἦλθον ἀγγελῶν,
εἰ μὴ ‘πεπύσμην ταῦτα τῶν σάφ᾽ εἰδότων.

Χορός

τὸ πρᾶγμα τουτὶ δεινὸν εἰσαγγέλλεται.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ γυναῖκες οὐκ ἐλινύειν ἐχρῆν,
ἀλλὰ σκοπεῖν τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ ζητεῖν ὅπου
λέληθεν ἡμᾶς κρυπτὸς ἐγκαθήμενος.

καὶ σὺ ξυνέξευρ᾽ αὐτόν, ὡς ἂν τὴν χάριν
ταύτην τε κἀκείνην ἔχῃς ὧ πρόξενε.

Κλεισθένης

φέρ᾽ ἴδω: τίς ἡ πρώτη σύ;

Μνησίλοχος
ποῖ τις τρέψεται;

Κλεισθένης

ζητητέαι γάρ ἐστε.

Μνησίλοχος
κακοδαίμων ἐγώ.

Γυνὴ Α

605 ἔμ᾽ ἥτις εἶμ᾽ ἤρου; Κλεωνύμου γυνή.

Κλεισθένης

γιγνώσκεθ᾽ ὑμεῖς ἥτις ἔσθ᾽ ἥδ᾽ ἡ γυνή;

Χορός

γιγνώσκομεν δῆτ᾽. ἀλλὰ τὰς ἄλλας ἄθρει.

Κλεισθένης

ἡδὶ δὲ δὴ τίς ἐστιν ἡ τὸ παιδίον
ἔχουσα;

Γυνὴ Α
τίτθη νὴ Δί᾽ ἐμή.

Μνησίλοχος
διοίχομαι.

Κλεισθένης

αὕτη σὺ ποῖ στρέφει; μέν᾽ αὐτοῦ. τί τὸ κακόν;

Μνησίλοχος

ἔασον οὐρῆσαί μ᾽.

Κλεισθένης
ἀναίσχυντός τις εἶ.
σὺ δ᾽ οὖν ποίει τοῦτ᾽. ἀναμενῶ γὰρ ἐνθάδε.

Χορός

ἀνάμενε δῆτα καὶ σκόπει γ᾽ αὐτὴν σφόδρα:
μόνην γὰρ αὐτὴν ὧνερ οὐ γιγνώσκομεν.

Κλεισθένης

πολύν γε χρόνον οὐρεῖς σύ.

Μνησίλοχος
νὴ Δί᾽ ὦ μέλε:
στραγγουριῶ γάρ: ἐχθὲς ἔφαγον κάρδαμα.

Κλεισθένης

τί καρδαμίζεις; οὐ βαδιεῖ δεῦρ᾽ ὡς ἐμέ;

Μνησίλοχος

τί δῆτά μ᾽ ἕλκεις ἀσθενοῦσαν;

Κλεισθένης
εἰπέ μοι,
τίς ἔστ᾽ ἀνήρ σοι;

Μνησίλοχος
τὸν ἐμὸν ἄνδρα πυνθάνει;
τὸν δεῖνα γιγνώσκεις, τὸν ἐκ Κοθωκιδῶν;

Κλεισθένης

τὸν δεῖνα; ποῖον;

Μνησίλοχος
ἔσθ᾽ ὁ δεῖν᾽, ὃς καί ποτε
τὸν δεῖνα τὸν τοῦ δεῖνα —

Κλεισθένης
ληρεῖν μοι δοκεῖς.
ἀνῆλθες ἤδη δεῦρο πρότερον;

Μνησίλοχος
νὴ Δία
ὁσέτη γε.

Κλεισθένης
καὶ τίς σοὐστὶ συσκηνήτρια;

Μνησίλοχος

ἡ δεῖν᾽ ἔμοιγ᾽.

Κλεισθένης
οἴμοι τάλας, οὐδὲν λέγεις.

Γυνὴ Α

ἄπελθ᾽. ἐγὼ γὰρ βασανιῶ ταύτην καλῶς
ἐκ τῶν ἱερῶν τῶν πέρυσι: σὺ δ᾽ ἀπόστηθί μοι,
ἵνα μὴ ‘πακούσῃς ὢν ἀνήρ. σὺ δ᾽ εἰπέ μοι
ὅ τι πρῶτον ἡμῖν τῶν ἱερῶν ἐδείκνυτο.

Μνησίλοχος

φέρ᾽ ἴδω, τί μέντοι πρῶτον ἦν; ἐπίνομεν.

Γυνὴ Α

τί δὲ μετὰ τοῦτο δεύτερον;

Μνησίλοχος
προὐπίνομεν.

Γυνὴ Α

ταυτὶ μὲν ἤκουσάς τινος: τί δαὶ τρίτον;

Μνησίλοχος

σκάφιον Ξένυλλ᾽ ᾔτησεν: οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἀμίς.

Γυνὴ Α

οὐδὲν λέγεις. δεῦρ᾽ ἐλθὲ δεῦρ᾽ ὦ Κλείσθενες:
ὅδ᾽ ἐστὶν ἀνὴρ ὃν λέγεις.

Κλεισθένης
τί οὖν ποιῶ;

Γυνὴ Α

ἀπόδυσον αὐτόν: οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς γὰρ λέγει.

Μνησίλοχος

κἄπειτ᾽ ἀποδύσετ᾽ ἐννέα παίδων μητέρα;

Κλεισθένης

χάλα ταχέως τὸ στρόφιον ὦναίσχυντε σύ.

Γυνὴ Α

ὡς καὶ στιβαρά τις φαίνεται καὶ καρτερά:
καὶ νὴ Δία τιτθούς γ᾽ ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἔχει.

Μνησίλοχος

στερίφη γάρ εἰμι κοὐκ ἐκύησα πώποτε.

Γυνὴ Α

νῦν: τότε δὲ μήτηρ ἦσθα παίδων ἐννέα.

Κλεισθένης

ἀνίστασ᾽ ὀρθός. ποῖ τὸ πέος ὠθεῖς κάτω;

Γυνὴ Α

τοδὶ διέκυψε καὶ μάλ᾽ εὔχρων ὦ τάλαν.

Κλεισθένης

καὶ ποῦ ‘στιν;

Γυνὴ Α
αὖθις ἐς τὸ πρόσθεν οἴχεται.

Κλεισθένης

οὐκ ἐνγεταυθί.

Γυνὴ Α
μἀλλὰ δεῦρ᾽ ἥκει πάλιν.

Κλεισθένης

ἰσθμόν τιν᾽ ἔχεις ὦνθρωπ᾽: ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω
τὸ πέος διέλκεις πυκνότερον Κορινθίων.

Γυνὴ Α

ὦ μιαρὸς οὗτος: ταῦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ὑπὲρ Εὐριπίδου
ἡμῖν ἐλοιδορεῖτο.

Μνησίλοχος
κακοδαίμων ἐγώ,
εἰς οἷ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν εἰσεκύλισα πράγματα.

Γυνὴ Α

ἄγε δὴ τί δρῶμεν;

Κλεισθένης
τουτονὶ φυλάττετε
καλῶς, ὅπως μὴ διαφυγὼν οἰχήσεται:
ἐγὼ δὲ ταῦτα τοῖς πρυτάνεσιν ἀγγελῶ.

Χορός

ἡμᾶς τοίνυν μετὰ τοῦτ᾽ ἤδη τὰς λαμπάδας ἁψαμένας χρὴ
ξυζωσαμένας εὖ κἀνδρείως τῶν θ᾽ ἱματίων ἀποδύσας
ζητεῖν, εἴ που κἄλλος τις ἀνὴρ ἀνελήλυθε, καὶ περιθρέξαι
τὴν πύκνα πᾶσαν καὶ τὰς σκηνὰς καὶ τὰς διόδους διαθρῆσαι. **Χορός**

εἶα δὴ πρώτιστα μὲν χρὴ κοῦφον ἐξορμᾶν πόδα
καὶ διασκοπεῖν σιωπῇ πανταχῇ: μόνον δὲ χρὴ
μὴ βραδύνειν, ὡς ὁ καιρός ἐστι μὴ μέλλειν ἔτι,
ἀλλὰ τὴν πρώτην τρέχειν χρῆν ὡς τάχιστ᾽ ἤδη κύκλῳ. **Χορός**

εἶά νυν ἴχνευε καὶ μάτευε ταχὺ πάντ᾽,
εἴ τις ἐν τόποις ἑδραῖος
ἄλλος αὖ λέληθεν ὤν.
πανταχῇ δὲ ῥῖψον ὄμμα,
καὶ τὰ τῇδε καὶ τὰ δεῦρο
πάντ᾽ ἀνασκόπει καλῶς. **Χορός**

ἢν γάρ με λάθῃ δράσας ἀνόσια,
δώσει τε δίκην καὶ πρὸς τούτῳ
τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνδράσιν ἔσται
παράδειγμ᾽ ὕβρεως ἀδίκων τ᾽ ἔργων
ἀθέων τε τρόπων:
φήσει δ᾽ εἶναί τε θεοὺς φανερῶς,
δείξει τ᾽ ἤδη
πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις σεβίζειν δαίμονας ...
†δικαίως τ᾽ ἐφέποντας † ὅσια καὶ νόμιμα
μηδομένους ποιεῖν ὅ τι καλῶς ἔχει.
κἂν μὴ ποιῶσι ταῦτα τοιάδ᾽ ἔσται:
αὐτῶν ὅταν ληφθῇ τις ἀνόσιόν τι δρῶν,
†μανίαις† φλέγων λύσσῃ παράκοπος,

†εἴ τι δρῴη†
πᾶσιν ἐμφανὴς ὁρᾶν ἔσται γυναιξὶ καὶ βροτοῖσιν,
ὅτι τά τε παράνομα τά τ᾽ ἀνόσια παρὼν
θεὸς ἀποτίνεται.
ἀλλ᾽ ἔοιχ᾽ ἡμῖν ἅπαντά τως διεσκέφθαι καλῶς.
οὐχ ὁρῶμεν γοῦν ἔτ᾽ ἄλλον οὐδέν᾽ ἐγκαθήμενον. **Γυνὴ Α**

ἆ ποῖ σὺ φεύγεις; οὗτος οὗτος οὐ μενεῖς;
τάλαιν᾽ ἐγὼ τάλαινα, καὶ τὸ παιδίον
ἐξαρπάσας μοι φροῦδος ἀπὸ τοῦ τιτθίου.

Μνησίλοχος

κέκραχθι: τοῦτο δ᾽ οὐδέποτε σὺ ψωμιεῖς,
ἢν μή μ᾽ ἀφῇτ᾽: ἀλλ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ ἐπὶ τῶν μηρίων
πληγὲν μαχαίρᾳ τῇδε φοινίας φλέβας
καθαιματώσει βωμόν.

Γυνὴ Α
ὦ τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ.
γυναῖκες, οὐκ ἀρήξετ᾽; οὐ πολλὴν βοὴν
στήσεσθε καὶ τροπαῖον, ἀλλὰ τοῦ μόνου
τέκνου με περιόψεσθ᾽ ἀποστερουμένην;

Χορός

ἔα ἔα.
ὦ πότνιαι Μοῖραι τί τόδε δέρκομαι
νεοχμὸν αὖ τέρας;
ὡς ἅπαντ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐστὶ τόλμης μεστὰ κἀναισχυντίας.
οἷον αὖ δέδρακεν ἔργον, οἷον αὖ φίλαι τόδε.

Μνησίλοχος

οἷον ὑμῶν ἐξαράξω τὴν ἄγαν αὐθαδίαν.

Χορός

ταῦτα δῆτ᾽ οὐ δεινὰ πράγματ᾽ ἐστὶ καὶ περαιτέρω;

Γυνὴ Α

δεινὰ δῆθ᾽, ὅστις γ᾽ ἔχει μου ‘ξαρπάσας τὸ παιδίον.

Χορός

τί ἂν οὖν εἴποι πρὸς ταῦτά τις, ὅτε
τοιαῦτα ποιῶν ὅδ᾽ ἀναισχυντεῖ;

Μνησίλοχος

κοὔπω μέντοι γε πέπαυμαι.

Χορός

ἀλλ᾽ οὖν ἥκεις γ᾽ ὅθεν οὐ φαύλως γ᾽
ἀποδρὰς λέξεις
οἷον δράσας διέδυς ἔργον,
λήψει δὲ κακόν.

Μνησίλοχος

τοῦτο μέντοι μὴ γένοιτο μηδαμῶς, ἀπεύχομαι.

Χορός

τίς οὖν σοι, τίς ἂν σύμμαχος ἐκ θεῶν
ἀθανάτων ἔλθοι ξὺν ἀδίκοις ἔργοις;

Μνησίλοχος

μάτην λαλεῖτε: τὴν δ᾽ ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀφήσω.

Χορός

ἀλλ᾽ οὐ μὰ τὼ θεὼ τάχ᾽ οὐ χαίρων ἴσως
ἐνυβριεῖς λόγους λέξεις τ᾽ ἀνοσίους
ἐπ᾽ ἀθέοις ἔργοις:
καὶ γὰρ ἀνταμειψόμεσθά σ᾽ ὥσπερ εἰκὸς ἀντὶ τῶνδε.
τάχα δὲ μεταβαλοῦσ᾽ ἐπὶ κακὸν ἑτερότροπον

ἐπέχει τύχη.
ἀλλὰ τάσδε μὲν λαβεῖν χρῆν σ᾽ ἐκφέρειν τε τῶν ξύλων,
καὶ καταίθειν τὸν πανοῦργον πυρπολεῖν θ᾽ ὅσον τάχος.

Γυνὴ Α

ἴωμεν ἐπὶ τὰς κληματίδας ὦ Μανία.
κἀγώ σ᾽ ἀποδείξω θυμάλωπα τήμερον.

Μνησίλοχος

ὕφαπτε καὶ κάταιθε: σὺ δὲ τὸ Κρητικὸν
ἀπόδυθι ταχέως: τοῦ θανάτου δ᾽ ὦ παιδίον
μόνην γυναικῶν αἰτιῶ τὴν μητέρα.
τουτὶ τί ἔστιν; ἀσκὸς ἐγένεθ᾽ ἡ κόρη
οἴνου πλέως καὶ ταῦτα Περσικὰς ἔχων.
ὦ θερμόταται γυναῖκες, ὦ ποτίσταται
κἀκ παντὸς ὑμεῖς μηχανώμεναι πιεῖν,
ὦ μέγα καπήλοις ἀγαθὸν ἡμῖν δ᾽ αὖ κακόν,
κακὸν δὲ καὶ τοῖς σκευαρίοις καὶ τῇ κρόκῃ.

Γυνὴ Α

παράβαλλε πολλὰς κληματίδας ὦ Μανία.

Μνησίλοχος

παράβαλλε δῆτα: σὺ δ᾽ ἀπόκριναί μοι τοδί,
τουτὶ τεκεῖν φῄς;

Γυνὴ Α
καὶ δέκα μῆνας αὖτ᾽ ἐγὼ
ἤνεγκον.

Μνησίλοχος
ἤνεγκας σύ;

Γυνὴ Α
νὴ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν.

Μνησίλοχος

πρικότυλον ἢ πῶς; εἰπέ μοι.

Γυνὴ Α
τί μ᾽ ἠργάσω;
ἀπέδυσας ὦναίσχυντέ μου τὸ παιδίον
τυννοῦτον ὄν.

Μνησίλοχος
τυννοῦτο;

Γυνὴ Α
μικρὸν νὴ Δία.

Μνησίλοχος

πόσ᾽ ἔτη δὲ γέγονε; τρεῖς Χοᾶς ἢ τέτταρας;

Γυνὴ Α

σχεδὸν τοσοῦτον χῶσον ἐκ Διονυσίων.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀπόδος αὐτό.

Μνησίλοχος
μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω τουτονί.

Γυνὴ Α

ἐμπρήσομεν τοίνυν σε.

Μνησίλοχος
πάνυ γ᾽ ἐμπίμπρατε:
αὕτη δ᾽ ἀποσφαγήσεται μάλ᾽ αὐτίκα.

Γυνὴ Α

μὴ δῆθ᾽, ἱκετεύω σ᾽: ἀλλ᾽ ἔμ᾽ ὅ τι χρῄζεις ποίει
ὑπέρ γε τούτου.

Μνησίλοχος
φιλότεκνός τις εἶ φύσει.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἧττον ἥδ᾽ ἀποσφαγήσεται

Γυνὴ Α

οἴμοι τέκνον. δός μοι σφαγεῖον Μανία,
ἵν᾽ οὖν τό γ᾽ αἷμα τοῦ τέκνου τοὐμοῦ λάβω.

Μνησίλοχος

ὕπεχ᾽ αὐτό, χαριοῦμαι γὰρ ἔν γε τοῦτό σοι.

Γυνὴ Α

κακῶς ἀπόλοι᾽, ὡς φθονερὸς εἶ καὶ δυσμενής.

Μνησίλοχος

τουτὶ τὸ δέρμα τῆς ἱερείας γίγνεται.

Γυνὴ Α

τί τῆς ἱερείας γίγνεται;

Μνησίλοχος
τουτί. λαβέ.

Γυνὴ Γ

ταλαντάτη Μίκκα τίς ἐξεκόρησέ σε;
τίς τὴν ἀγαπητὴν παῖδά σοὐξῃρήσατο;

Γυνὴ Α

ὁ πανοῦργος οὗτος. ἀλλ᾽ ἐπειδήπερ πάρει,
φύλαξον αὐτόν, ἵνα λαβοῦσα Κλεισθένη
τοῖσιν πρυτάνεσιν ἃ πεποίηχ᾽ οὗτος φράσω.

Μνησίλοχος

ἄγε δὴ τίς ἔσται μηχανὴ σωτηρίας;
τίς πεῖρα, τίς ἐπίνοι᾽; ὁ μὲν γὰρ αἴτιος
κἄμ᾽ ἐσκυλίσας ἐς τοιαυτὶ πράγματα
οὐ φαίνεταί πω. φέρε τίν᾽ οὖν ἂν ἄγγελον
πέμψαιμ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτόν; οἶδ᾽ ἐγὼ καὶ δὴ πόρον
ἐκ τοῦ Παλαμήδους: ὡς ἐκεῖνος, τὰς πλάτας
ῥίψω γράφων. ἀλλ᾽ οὐ πάρεισιν αἱ πλάται.
πόθεν οὖν γένοιντ᾽ ἄν μοι πλάται πόθεν; πόθεν;
τί δ᾽ ἂν εἰ ταδὶ τἀγάλματ᾽ ἀντὶ τῶν πλατῶν
γράφων διαρρίπτοιμι; βέλτιον πολύ.
ξύλον γέ τοι καὶ ταῦτα κἀκεῖν᾽ ἦν ξύλον.

Μνησίλοχος

ὦ χεῖρες ἐμαὶ
ἐγχειρεῖν χρῆν ἔργῳ πορίμῳ.
ἄγε δὴ πινάκων ξεστῶν δέλτοι,
δέξασθε σμίλης ὁλκοὺς
κήρυκας ἐμῶν μόχθων: οἴμοι
τουτὶ τὸ ῥῶ μοχθηρόν:
χώρει χώρει. ποίαν αὔλακα;
βάσκετ᾽ ἐπείγετε πάσας καθ᾽ ὁδοὺς
κείνᾳ ταύτᾳ: ταχέως χρή. **Χορός**

ἡμεῖς τοίνυν ἡμᾶς αὐτὰς εὖ λέξωμεν παραβᾶσαι,
καίτοι πᾶς τις τὸ γυναικεῖον φῦλον κακὰ πόλλ᾽ ἀγορεύει,
ὡς πᾶν ἐσμὲν κακὸν ἀνθρώποις κἀξ ἡμῶν ἐστιν ἅπαντα,
ἔριδες νείκη στάσις ἀργαλέα λύπη πόλεμος. φέρε δή νυν,
εἰ κακόν ἐσμεν, τί γαμεῖθ᾽ ἡμᾶς, εἴπερ ἀληθῶς κακόν ἐσμεν,
κἀπαγορεύετε μήτ᾽ ἐξελθεῖν μήτ᾽ ἐκκύψασαν ἁλῶναι,
ἀλλ᾽ οὑτωσὶ πολλῇ σπουδῇ τὸ κακὸν βούλεσθε φυλάττειν;
κἂν ἐξέλθῃ τὸ γύναιόν ποι, κᾆθ᾽ εὕρητ᾽ αὐτὸ θύρασιν,
μανίας μαίνεσθ᾽, οὓς χρῆν σπένδειν καὶ χαίρειν, εἴπερ ἀληθῶς
ἔνδοθεν ηὕρετε φροῦδον τὸ κακὸν καὶ μὴ κατελαμβάνετ᾽ ἔνδον.
κἂν καταδάρθωμεν ἐν ἀλλοτρίων παίζουσαι καὶ κοπιῶσαι,
πᾶς τις τὸ κακὸν τοῦτο ζητεῖ περὶ τὰς κλίνας περινοστῶν.
κἂν ἐκ θυρίδος παρακύπτωμεν, τὸ κακὸν ζητεῖτε θεᾶσθαι:
κἂν αἰσχυνθεῖσ᾽ ἀναχωρήσῃ, πολὺ μᾶλλον πᾶς ἐπιθυμεῖ
αὖθις τὸ κακὸν παρακύψαν ἰδεῖν. οὕτως ἡμεῖς ἐπιδήλως

ὑμῶν ἐσμεν πολὺ βελτίους, βάσανός τε πάρεστιν ἰδέσθαι.
βάσανον δῶμεν πότεροι χείρους. ἡμεῖς μὲν γάρ φαμεν ὑμᾶς,
ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ἡμᾶς. σκεψώμεθα δὴ κἀντιτιθῶμεν πρὸς ἕκαστον,
παραβάλλουσαι τῆς τε γυναικὸς καὶ τἀνδρὸς τοὔνομ᾽ ἑκάστου.
Ναυσιμάχης μέν γ᾽ ἥττων ἐστὶν Χαρμῖνος: δῆλα δὲ τἄργα.
καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ Κλεοφῶν χείρων πάντως δήπου Ξαλαβακχοῦς.
πρὸς Ἀριστομάχην δὲ χρόνου πολλοῦ, πρὸς ἐκείνην τὴν Μαραθῶνι,
καὶ Ξτρατονίκην ὑμῶν οὐδεὶς οὐδ᾽ ἐγχειρεῖ πολεμίζειν.
ἀλλ᾽ Εὐβούλης τῶν πέρυσίν τις βουλευτής ἐστιν ἀμείνων
παραδοὺς ἑτέρῳ τὴν βουλείαν; οὐδ᾽ αὐτὸς τοῦτό γε φήσεις.
οὕτως ἡμεῖς πολὺ βελτίους τῶν ἀνδρῶν εὐχόμεθ᾽ εἶναι.
οὐδ᾽ ἂν κλέψασα γυνὴ ζεύγει κατὰ πεντήκοντα τάλαντα
ἐς πόλιν ἔλθοι τῶν δημοσίων: ἀλλ᾽ ἢν τὰ μέγισθ᾽ ὑφέληται
φορμὸν πυρῶν τἀνδρὸς κλέψασ᾽, αὐθημερὸν αὖτ᾽ ἀπέδωκεν. **Χορός**

ἀλλ᾽ ἡμεῖς ἂν πολλοὺς τούτων
ἀποδείξαιμεν ταῦτα ποιοῦντας.
καὶ πρὸς τούτοις γάστριδας ἡμῶν
ὄντας μᾶλλον καὶ λωποδύτας
καὶ βωμολόχους κἀνδραποδιστάς.
καὶ μὲν δήπου καὶ τὰ πατρῷά γε
χείρους ἡμῶν εἰσιν σῴζειν:
ἡμῖν μὲν γὰρ σῶν ἔτι καὶ νῦν
τἀντίον ὁ κανὼν οἱ καλαθίσκοι
τὸ σκιάδειον:
τοῖς δ᾽ ἡμετέροις ἀνδράσι τούτοις
ἀπόλωλεν μὲν πολλοῖς ὁ κανὼν
ἐκ τῶν οἴκων αὐτῇ λόγχῃ,
πολλοῖς δ᾽ ἑτέροις ἀπὸ τῶν ὤμων
ἐν ταῖς στρατιαῖς
ἔρριπται τὸ σκιάδειον. **Χορός**

πόλλ᾽ ἂν αἱ γυναῖκες ἡμεῖς ἐν δίκῃ μεμψαίμεθ᾽ ἂν
τοῖσιν ἀνδράσιν δικαίως, ἓν δ᾽ ὑπερφυέστατον.
χρῆν γάρ, ἡμῶν εἰ τέκοι τις ἄνδρα χρηστὸν τῇ πόλει,
ταξίαρχον ἢ στρατηγόν, λαμβάνειν τιμήν τινα,
προεδρίαν τ᾽ αὐτῇ δίδοσθαι Στηνίοισι καὶ Σκίροις
ἔν τε ταῖς ἄλλαις ἑορταῖς αἷσιν ἡμεῖς ἤγομεν:
εἰ δὲ δειλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν ἄνδρα τις τέκοι γυνή,

ἢ τριήραρχον πονηρὸν ἢ κυβερνήτην κακόν,
ὑστέραν αὐτὴν καθῆσθαι σκάφιον ἀποκεκαρμένην
τῆς τὸν ἀνδρεῖον τεκούσης. τῷ γὰρ εἰκὸς ὦ πόλις
τὴν Ὑπερβόλου καθῆσθαι μητέρ᾽ ἠμφιεσμένην
λευκὰ καὶ κόμας καθεῖσαν πλησίον τῆς Λαμάχου,
καὶ δανείζειν χρήματ᾽, ᾗ χρῆν, εἰ δανείσειέν τινι
καὶ τόκον πράττοιτο, διδόναι μηδέν᾽ ἀνθρώπων τόκον,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀφαιρεῖσθαι βίᾳ τὰ χρήματ᾽ εἰπόντας τοδί,
‘ἀξία γοῦν εἶ τόκου τεκοῦσα τοιοῦτον τόκον.’ **Μνησίλοχος**

ἰλλὸς γεγένημαι προσδοκῶν: ὁ δ᾽ οὐδέπω.
τί δῆτ᾽ ἂν εἴη τοὐμποδών; οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως
οὐ τὸν Παλαμήδην ψυχρὸν ὄντ᾽ αἰσχύνεται.
τῷ δῆτ᾽ ἂν αὐτὸν προσαγαγοίμην δράματι;
ἐγῷδα: τὴν καινὴν Ἑλένην μιμήσομαι.
πάντως ὑπάρχει μοι γυναικεία στολή.

Γυνὴ Γ

τί αὖ σὺ κυρκανᾷς; τί κοικύλλεις ἔχων;
πικρὰν Ἑλένην ὄψει τάχ᾽, εἰ μὴ κοσμίως
ἔξεις, ἕως ἂν τῶν πρυτάνεών τις φανῇ.

Μνησίλοχος

Νείλου μὲν αἵδε καλλιπάρθενοι ῥοαί,
ὃς ἀντὶ δίας ψακάδος Αἰγύπτου πέδον
λευκῆς νοτίζει μελανοσυρμαῖον λεών.

Γυνὴ Γ

πανοῦργος εἶ νὴ τὴν Ἑκάτην τὴν φωσφόρον.

Μνησίλοχος

ἐμοὶ δὲ γῆ μὲν πατρὶς οὐκ ἀνώνυμος
Σπάρτη, πατὴρ δὲ Τυνδάρεως.

Γυνὴ Γ
σοί γ᾽ ὦλεθρε

πατὴρ ἐκεῖνός ἐστι; Φρυνώνδας μὲν οὖν.

Μνησίλοχος

Ἑλένη δ᾽ ἐκλήθην.

Γυνὴ Γ
αὖθις αὖ γίγνει γυνή,
πρὶν τῆς ἑτέρας δοῦναι γυναικίσεως δίκην;

Μνησίλοχος

ψυχαὶ δὲ πολλαὶ δι᾽ ἔμ᾽ ἐπὶ Σκαμανδρίαις
ῥοαῖσιν ἔθανον.

Γυνὴ Γ
ὄφελες δὲ καὶ σύ γε.

Μνησίλοχος

κἀγὼ μὲν ἐνθάδ᾽ εἶμ᾽: ὁ δ᾽ ἄθλιος πόσις
οὑμὸς Μενέλαος οὐδέπω προσέρχεται.
τί οὖν ἔτι ζῶ;

Γυνὴ Γ
τῶν κοράκων πονηρίᾳ.

Μνησίλοχος

ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ αἰκάλλει τι καρδίαν ἐμήν.
μὴ ψεῦσον ὦ Ζεῦ τῆς ἐπιούσης ἐλπίδος.

Εὐριπίδης

τίς τῶνδ᾽ ἐρυμνῶν δωμάτων ἔχει κράτος,
ὅστις ξένους δέξαιτο ποντίῳ σάλῳ
κάμνοντας ἐν χειμῶνι καὶ ναυαγίαις;

Μνησίλοχος

Πρωτέως τάδ᾽ ἐστὶ μέλαθρα.

Εὐριπίδης
ποίου Πρωτέως;

Γυνὴ Γ

ὦ τρισκακόδαιμον, ψεύδεται νὴ τὼ θεώ,
ἐπεὶ τέθνηκε Πρωτέας ἔτη δέκα.

Εὐριπίδης

ποίαν δὲ χώραν εἰσεκέλσαμεν σκάφει;

Μνησίλοχος
Αἴγυπτον.

Εὐριπίδης
ὦ δύστηνος οἷ πεπλώκαμεν.

Γυνὴ Γ

πείθει τι τούτῳ τῷ κακῶς ἀπολουμένῳ
ληροῦντι λῆρον; Θεσμοφορεῖον τουτογί.

Εὐριπίδης

αὐτὸς δὲ Πρωτεὺς ἔνδον ἔστ᾽ ἢ ‘ξώπιος;

Γυνὴ Γ

οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως οὐ ναυτιᾷς ἔτ᾽ ὦ ξένε,
ὅστις γ᾽ ἀκούσας ὅτι τέθνηκε Πρωτέας
ἔπειτ᾽ ἐρωτᾷς ‘ἔνδον ἔστ᾽ ἢ ‘ξώπιος;’

Εὐριπίδης

αἰαῖ τέθνηκε. ποῦ δ᾽ ἐτυμβεύθη τάφῳ;

Μνησίλοχος

τόδ᾽ ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ σῆμ᾽, ἐφ᾽ ᾧ καθήμεθα.

Γυνὴ Γ

κακῶς τ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐξόλοιο κἀξολεῖ γέ τοι,
ὅστις γε τολμᾷς σῆμα τὸν βωμὸν καλεῖν.

Εὐριπίδης

τί δὴ σὺ θάσσεις τάσδε τυμβήρεις ἕδρας
φάρει καλυπτὸς ὦ ξένη;

Μνησίλοχος
βιάζομαι
γάμοισι Πρωτέως παιδὶ συμμεῖξαι λέχος.

Γυνὴ Γ

τί ὦ κακόδαιμον ἐξαπατᾷς αὖ τὸν ξένον;
οὗτος πανουργῶν δεῦρ᾽ ἀνῆλθεν ὦ ξένε
ὡς τὰς γυναῖκας ἐπὶ κλοπῇ τοῦ χρυσίου.

Μνησίλοχος

βάυζε τοὐμὸν σῶμα βάλλουσα ψόγῳ.

Εὐριπίδης

ξένη τίς ἡ γραῦς ἡ κακορροθοῦσά σε;

Μνησίλοχος

αὕτη Θεονόη Πρωτέως.

Γυνὴ Γ
μὰ τὼ θεὼ
εἰ μὴ Κρίτυλλά γ᾽ Ἀντιθέου Γαργηττόθεν:
σὺ δ᾽ εἶ πανοῦργος.

Μνησίλοχος

ὁπόσα τοι βούλει λέγε.
οὐ γὰρ γαμοῦμαι σῷ κασιγνήτῳ ποτὲ
προδοῦσα Μενέλεων τὸν ἐμὸν ἐν Τροίᾳ πόσιν.

Εὐριπίδης

γύναι τί εἶπας; στρέψον ἀνταυγεῖς κόρας.

Μνησίλοχος

αἰσχύνομαί σε τὰς γνάθους ὑβρισμένη.

Εὐριπίδης

τουτὶ τί ἔστιν; ἀφασία τίς τοί μ᾽ ἔχει.
ὦ θεοὶ τίν᾽ ὄψιν εἰσορῶ; τίς εἶ γύναι;

Μνησίλοχος

σὺ δ᾽ εἶ τίς; αὐτὸς γὰρ σὲ κἄμ᾽ ἔχει λόγος.

Εὐριπίδης

Ἑλληνὶς εἶ τις ἢ ‘πιχωρία γυνή;

Μνησίλοχος

Ἑλληνίς. ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σὸν θέλω μαθεῖν.

Εὐριπίδης

Ἑλένῃ σ᾽ ὁμοίαν δὴ μάλιστ᾽ εἶδον γύναι.

Μνησίλοχος

ἐγὼ δὲ Μενελάῳ σ᾽ ὅσα γ᾽ ἐκ τῶν ἰφύων.

Εὐριπίδης

ἔγνως ἄρ᾽ ὀρθῶς ἄνδρα δυστυχέστατον.

Μνησίλοχος

ὦ χρόνιος ἐλθὼν σῆς δάμαρτος ἐσχάρας
λαβέ με λαβέ με πόσι, περίβαλε δὲ χέρας.
φέρε σὲ κύσω. ἄπαγέ μ᾽ ἄπαγ᾽ ἄπαγέ με
λαβὼν ταχὺ πάνυ.

Γυνὴ Γ
κλαύσετ᾽ ἄρα νὴ τὼ θεὼ
ὅστις σ᾽ ἀπάξει τυπτόμενος τῇ λαμπάδι.

Εὐριπίδης

σὺ τὴν ἐμὴν γυναῖκα κωλύεις ἐμέ,
τὴν Τυνδάρειον παῖδ᾽, ἐπὶ Σπάρτην ἄγειν;

Γυνὴ Γ

οἴμ᾽ ὡς πανοῦργος καὐτὸς εἶναί μοι δοκεῖς
καὶ τοῦδέ τις ξύμβουλος. οὐκ ἐτὸς πάλαι
ἠγυπτιάζετ᾽. ἀλλ᾽ ὅδε μὲν δώσει δίκην.
προσέρχεται γὰρ ὁ πρύτανις χὠ τοξότης.

Εὐριπίδης

τουτὶ πονηρόν: ἀλλ᾽ ὑπαποκινητέον.

Μνησίλοχος

ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὁ κακοδαίμων τί δρῶ;

Εὐριπίδης
μέν᾽ ἥσυχος.
οὐ γὰρ προδώσω σ᾽ οὐδέποτ᾽, ἥνπερ ἐμπνέω,
ἢν μὴ προλίπωσ᾽ αἱ μυρίαι με μηχαναί.

Μνησίλοχος

αὕτη μὲν ἡ μήρινθος οὐδὲν ἔσπασεν.

Πρύτανις

ὅδ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὁ πανοῦργος ὃν ἔλεγ᾽ ἡμῖν Κλεισθένης;
οὗτος τί κύπτεις; δῆσον αὐτὸν εἰσάγων
ὦ τοξότ᾽ ἐν τῇ σανίδι, κἄπειτ᾽ ἐνθαδὶ
στήσας φύλαττε καὶ προσιέναι μηδένα
ἕα πρὸς αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ τὴν μάστιγ᾽ ἔχων
παῖ᾽ ἢν προσίῃ τις.

Γυνὴ Γ
νὴ Δί᾽ ὡς νῦν δή γ᾽ ἀνὴρ
ὀλίγου μ᾽ ἀφείλετ᾽ αὐτὸν ἱστιορράφος.

Μνησίλοχος

ὦ πρύτανι πρὸς τῆς δεξιᾶς, ἥνπερ φιλεῖς
κοίλην προτείνειν ἀργύριον ἤν τις διδῷ,
χάρισαι βραχύ τί μοι καίπερ ἀποθανουμένῳ.

Πρύτανις

τί σοι χαρίσωμαι;

Μνησίλοχος
γυμνὸν ἀποδύσαντά με
κέλευε πρὸς τῇ σανίδι δεῖν τὸν τοξότην,
ἵνα μὴ ‘ν κροκωτοῖς καὶ μίτραις γέρων ἀνὴρ
γέλωτα παρέχω τοῖς κόραξιν ἐστιῶν.

Πρύτανις

ἔχοντα ταῦτ᾽ ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ σε δεῖν,
ἵνα τοῖς παριοῦσι δῆλος ᾖς πανοῦργος ὤν.

Μνησίλοχος

ἰαππαπαιάξ: ὦ κροκώθ᾽ οἷ᾽ εἴργασαι:
κοὐκ ἔστ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἐλπὶς οὐδεμία σωτηρίας.

Χορός

ἄγε νυν ἡμεῖς παίσωμεν ἅπερ νόμος ἐνθάδε ταῖσι γυναιξίν,
ὅταν ὄργια σεμνὰ θεοῖν ἱεραῖς ὥραις ἀνέχωμεν, ἅπερ καὶ

Χορός

Παύσων σέβεται καὶ νηστεύει,
πολλάκις αὐτοῖν ἐκ τῶν ὡρῶν
ἐς τὰς ὥρας ξυνεπευχόμενος
τοιαῦτα μέλειν θάμ᾽ ἑαυτῷ.
ὅρμα χώρει:
κοῦφα ποσὶν ἄγ᾽ ἐς κύκλον,
χειρὶ σύναπτε χεῖρα,
ῥυθμὸν χορείας ὕπαγε πᾶσα:
βαῖνε καρπαλίμοιν ποδοῖν.
ἐπισκοπεῖν δὲ πανταχῇ
κυκλοῦσαν ὄμμα χρὴ χοροῦ κατάστασιν.

Χορός

ἅμα δὲ καὶ
γένος Ὀλυμπίων θεῶν
μέλπε καὶ γέραιρε φωνῇ πᾶσα χορομανεῖ τρόπῳ. **Χορός**

εἰ δέ τις
προσδοκᾷ κακῶς ἐρεῖν
ἐν ἱερῷ γυναῖκά μ᾽ οὖσαν ἄνδρας, οὐκ ὀρθῶς φρονεῖ.

Χορός

ἀλλὰ χρῆν
ὥσπερ ἔργον αὖ τι καινὸν
πρῶτον εὐκύκλου χορείας εὐφυᾶ στῆσαι βάσιν.

Χορός

πρόβαινε ποσὶ τὸν εὐλύραν
μέλπουσα καὶ τὴν τοξοφόρον
Ἄρτεμιν ἄνασσαν ἀγνήν.
χαῖρ᾽ ὦ ἑκάεργε,
ὄπαζε δὲ νίκην:

Ἥραν δὲ τὴν τελείαν
μέλψωμεν ὥσπερ εἰκός,
ἣ πᾶσι τοῖς χοροῖσιν ἐμπαίζει τε καὶ
κλῆδας γάμου φυλάττει. **Χορός**

Ἑρμῆν τε νόμιον ἄντομαι
καὶ Πᾶνα καὶ Νύμφας φίλας
ἐπιγελάσαι προθύμως
ταῖς ἡμετέραισι
χαρέντα χορείαις.
ἔξαιρε δὴ προθύμως
διπλῆν χάριν χορείας.
παίσωμεν ὦ γυναῖκες οἷάπερ νόμος,
νηστεύωμεν δὲ πάντως. **Χορός**

ἀλλ᾽ εἶα πάλλ᾽ ἀνάστρεφ᾽ εὐρύθμῳ ποδί,
τόρευε πᾶσαν ᾠδήν:
ἡγοῦ δέ γ᾽ ὦδ᾽ αὐτὸς σὺ
κισσοφόρε Βάκχειε
δέσποτ᾽: ἐγὼ δὲ κώμοις
σὲ φιλοχόροισι μέλψω. **Χορός**

εὔιον ὦ Διόνυσε
Βρόμιε καὶ Σεμέλας παῖ,
χοροῖς τερπόμενος
κατ᾽ ὄρεα νυμφᾶν †ἐρατοῖς† ἐν ὕμνοις,
εὔιον εὔιον εὐοῖ
... ἀναχορεύων. **Χορός**

ἀμφὶ δὲ σοὶ κτυπεῖται
Κιθαιρώνιος ἠχώ,
μελάμφυλλά τ᾽ ὄρη
δάσκια καὶ νάπαι πετρώδεις βρέμονται:
κύκλῳ δὲ περὶ σὲ κισσὸς
εὐπέταλος ἕλικι θάλλει. **Τοξότης**

ἐνταῦτα νῦν οἰμῶξι πρὸς τὴν αἰτρίαν.

Μνησίλοχος

ὦ τοξόθ᾽ ἱκετεύω σε.

Τοξότης
μή μ᾽ ἱκετεῦσι σύ.

Μνησίλοχος

χάλασον τὸν ἧλον.

Τοξότης
ἀλλὰ ταῦτα δρᾶσ᾽ ἐγώ.

Μνησίλοχος

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, μᾶλλον ἐπικρούεις σύ γε.

Τοξότης

ἔτι μᾶλλο βοῦλις;

Μνησίλοχος
ἀτταταῖ ἰατταταῖ:
κακῶς ἀπόλοιο.

Τοξότης
σῖγα κακοδαίμων γέρον.
πέρ᾽ ἐγὼ ‘ξινίγκι πορμός, ἵνα πυλάξι σοι.

Μνησίλοχος

ταυτὶ τὰ βέλτιστ᾽ ἀπολέλαυκ᾽ Εὐριπίδου.
ἔα: θεοί, Ζεῦ σῶτερ, εἰσὶν ἐλπίδες.
ἀνὴρ ἔοικεν οὐ προδώσειν, ἀλλά μοι
σημεῖον ὑπεδήλωσε Περσεὺς ἐκδραμών,
ὅτι δεῖ με γίγνεσθ᾽ Ἀνδρομέδαν: πάντως δέ μοι
τὰ δέσμ᾽ ὑπάρχει. δῆλον οὖν τοῦτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὅτι
ἥξει με σώσων: οὐ γὰρ ἂν παρέπτετο.

Εὐριπίδης

φίλαι παρθένοι φίλαι, πῶς ἂν οὖν
ἐπέλθοιμι καὶ
τὸν Σκύθην λάθοιμι;
κλύεις; ὦ πρὸς αἰδοῦς σὲ τὰν ἐν ἄντροις,
κατάνευσον, ἔασον ὡς
τὴν γυναῖκά μ᾽ ἐλθεῖν.

Μνησίλοχος

ἄνοικτος ὅς μ᾽ ἔδησε τὸν
πολυστονώτατον βροτῶν:
μόλις δὲ γραῖαν ἀποφυγὼν
σαπρὰν ἀπωλόμην ὅμως.
ὅδε γὰρ ὁ Σκύθης πάλαι μοι φύλαξ
ἐφεστὼς ὀλοὸν ἄφιλον ἐκρέμασεν
κόραξι δεῖπνον. ὁρᾷς; οὐ
χοροῖσιν οὐδ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ἡλίκων νεανίδων
κημὸν ἕστηκ᾽ ἔχουσ᾽,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐν πυκνοῖς δεσμοῖσιν ἐμπεπλεγμένη
κήτει βορὰ Γλαυκέτῃ πρόκειμαι,
γαμηλίῳ μὲν οὐ ξὺν
παιῶνι δεσμίῳ δὲ
γοᾶσθέ μ᾽ ὦ γυναῖκες, ὡς
μέλεα μὲν πέπονθα μέλεος,
ὦ τάλας ἐγὼ τάλας,
ἀπὸ δὲ συγγόνων τάλαν᾽ ἄνομα πάθεα,
φῶτά τε λιτομέναν, πολυδάκρυτον Ἀίδα
γόον †φεύγουσαν†
αἰαῖ αἰαῖ ἒ ἒ,
ὃς ἔμ᾽ ἀπεξύρησε πρῶτον,
ὃς ἐμὲ κροκόεντ᾽ ἐνέδυσεν:
ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖσδ᾽ ἐς τόδ᾽ ἀνέπεμψεν
ἱερόν, ἔνθα γυναῖκες.
ἰώ μοι μοίρας ἄτεγκτε δαίμων:
ὦ κατάρατος ἐγώ:
τίς ἐμὸν οὐκ ἐπόψεται
πάθος ἀμέγαρτον ἐπὶ κακῶν παρουσίᾳ;
εἴθε με πυρφόρος αἰθέρος ἀστὴρ —
τὸν βάρβαρον ἐξολέσειεν.

οὐ γὰρ ἔτ᾽ ἀθανάταν φλόγα λεύσσειν
ἐστὶν ἐμοὶ φίλον, ὡς ἐκρεμάσθην,
λαιμότμητ᾽ ἄχη δαιμόνων αἰόλαν
νέκυσιν ἐπὶ πορείαν.

Εὐριπίδης

χαῖρ᾽ ὦ φίλη παῖ: τὸν δὲ πατέρα Κηφέα
ὅς σ᾽ ἐξέθηκεν ἀπολέσειαν οἱ θεοί.

Μνησίλοχος

σὺ δ᾽ εἶ τίς ἥτις τοὐμὸν ᾤκτιρας πάθος;

Εὐριπίδης

Ἠχὼ λόγων ἀντῳδὸς ἐπικοκκάστρια,
ἥπερ πέρυσιν ἐν τῷδε ταὐτῷ χωρίῳ
Εὐριπίδῃ καὐτὴ ξυνηγωνιζόμην.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ τέκνον σὲ μὲν τὸ σαυτῆς χρὴ ποιεῖν,
κλάειν ἐλεινῶς.

Μνησίλοχος
σὲ δ᾽ ἐπικλάειν ὕστερον.

Εὐριπίδης

ἐμοὶ μελήσει ταῦτά γ᾽. ἀλλ᾽ ἄρχου λόγων.

Μνησίλοχος

ὦ νὺξ ἱερὰ
ὡς μακρὸν ἵππευμα διώκεις
ἀστεροειδέα νῶτα διφρεύουσ᾽
αἰθέρος ἱερᾶς
τοῦ σεμνοτάτου δι᾽ Ὀλύμπου;

Εὐριπίδης

δι᾽ Ὀλύμπου.

Μνησίλοχος

τί ποτ᾽ Ἀνδρομέδα περίαλλα κακῶν
μέρος ἐξέλαχον —

Εὐριπίδης
μέρος ἐξέλαχον —

Μνησίλοχος

θανάτου τλήμων;

Εὐριπίδης
θανάτου τλήμων;

Μνησίλοχος

ἀπολεῖς μ᾽ ὦ γραῦ στωμυλλομένη.

Εὐριπίδης

στωμυλλομένη.

Μνησίλοχος

νὴ Δί᾽ ὀχληρά γ᾽ εἰσήρρηκας
λίαν.

Εὐριπίδης
λίαν.

Μνησίλοχος

ὦγάθ᾽ ἔασόν με μονῳδῆσαι,
καὶ χαριεῖ μοι. παῦσαι.

Εὐριπίδης
παῦσαι.

Μνησίλοχος

βάλλ᾽ ἐς κόρακας.

Εὐριπίδης
βάλλ᾽ ἐς κόρακας.

Μνησίλοχος

τί κακόν;

Εὐριπίδης
τί κακόν;

Μνησίλοχος
ληρεῖς.

Εὐριπίδης
ληρεῖς.

Μνησίλοχος

οἴμωζ᾽.

Εὐριπίδης
οἴμωζ᾽.

Μνησίλοχος
ὀτότυζ᾽.

Εὐριπίδης
ὀτότυζ᾽.

Τοξότης

οὗτος σί λαλῖς;

Εὐριπίδης
οὗτος σί λαλῖς;

Τοξότης

πρυτάνεις καλέσω;

Εὐριπίδης
πρυτάνεις καλέσω;

Τοξότης

σί κακόν;

Εὐριπίδης
σί κακόν;

Τοξότης

πῶτε τὸ πωνή;

Εὐριπίδης
πῶτε τὸ πωνή;

Τοξότης

σὺ λαλῖς;

Εὐριπίδης
σὺ λαλῖς;

Τοξότης
κλαύσει.

Εὐριπίδης
κλαύσει.

Τοξότης

κακκάσκι μοι;

Εὐριπίδης
κακκάσκι μοι;

Μνησίλοχος

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ γυνὴ πλησίον αὕτη.

Εὐριπίδης

πλησίον αὕτη.

Τοξότης

ποῦ στ᾽ η᾽ μιαρά; καὶ δὴ πεύγει.
ποῖ ποῖ πεύγεις;

Εὐριπίδης
ποῖ ποῖ πεύγεις;

Τοξότης

οὐ καιρήσεις;

Εὐριπίδης
οὐ καιρήσεις;

Τοξότης

ἔτι γὰρ γρύζεις;

Εὐριπίδης
ἔτι γὰρ γρύζεις;

Τοξότης

λαβὲ τὴ μιαρά.

Εὐριπίδης
λαβὲ τὴ μιαρά.

Τοξότης

λάλο καὶ κατάρατο γύναικο.

Εὐριπίδης

ὦ θεοὶ τίν᾽ ἐς γῆν βαρβάρων ἀφίγμεθα
ταχεῖ πεδίλῳ; διὰ μέσου γὰρ αἰθέρος
τέμνων κέλευθον πόδα τίθημ᾽ ὑπόπτερον
Περσεὺς πρὸς Ἄργος ναυστολῶν τὸ Γοργόνος
κάρα κομίζων.

Τοξότης
τί λέγι; τὴ Γόργος πέρι
τὸ γραμματέο σὺ τὴ κεπαλή;

Εὐριπίδης
τὴν Γοργόνος
ἔγωγε φημί.

Τοξότης
Γόργο τοι κἀγὼ λέγι.

Εὐριπίδης

ἔα: τίν᾽ ὄχθον τόνδ᾽ ὁρῶ καὶ παρθένον
θεαῖς ὁμοίαν ναῦν ὅπως ὡρμισμένην;

Μνησίλοχος

ὦ ξένε κατοίκτιρόν με τὴν παναθλίαν,
λῦσόν με δεσμῶν.

Τοξότης
οὐκὶ μὶ λαλῆσι σύ;
κατάρατο τολμᾷς ἀποτανουμένη λαλᾷς;

Εὐριπίδης

ὦ παρθέν᾽ οἰκτίρω σὲ κρεμαμένην ὁρῶν.

Τοξότης

οὐ παρτέν᾽ ἐστίν, ἀλλ᾽ ἁμαρτωλὴ γέρων
καὶ κλέπτο καὶ πανοῦργο.

Εὐριπίδης
ληρεῖς ὦ Σκύθα.
αὕτη γάρ ἐστιν Ἀνδρομέδα παῖς Κηφέως.

Τοξότης

σκέψαι τὸ κύστο: μή τι μικτὸν παίνεται;

Εὐριπίδης

φέρε δεῦρό μοι τὴν χεῖρ᾽, ἵν᾽ ἅψωμαι κόρης:
φέρε Σκύθ᾽: ἀνθρώποισι γὰρ νοσήματα
ἅπασίν ἐστιν: ἐμὲ δὲ καὐτὸν τῆς κόρης
ταύτης ἔρως εἵληφεν.

Τοξότης
οὐ ζηλῶσί σε:
ἀτὰρ εἰ τὸ πρωκτὸ δεῦρο περιεστραμμένον,
οὐκ ἐπτόνησά σ᾽ αὐτὸ πυγίζεις ἄγων.

Εὐριπίδης

τί δ᾽ οὐκ ἐᾷς λύσαντά μ᾽ αὐτὴν ὦ Σκύθα
πεσεῖν ἐς εὐνὴν καὶ γαμήλιον λέχος;

Τοξότης

εἰ σπόδρ᾽ ἐπιτυμεῖς τὴ γέροντο πύγισο,
τὴ σανίδο τρήσας ἐξόπιστο πρώκτισον.

Εὐριπίδης

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ λύσω δεσμά.

Τοξότης
μαστιγῶ σ᾽ ἄρα.

Εὐριπίδης

καὶ μὴν ποιήσω τοῦτο.

Τοξότης
τὸ κεπαλή σ᾽ ἄρα
τὸ ξιπομάκαιραν ἀποκεκόψι τουτοϊ.

Εὐριπίδης

αἰαῖ: τί δράσω; πρὸς τίνας στρεφθῶ λόγους;
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ γὰρ ἂν δέξαιτο βάρβαρος φύσις.
σκαιοῖσι γάρ τοι καινὰ προσφέρων σοφὰ
μάτην ἀναλίσκοις ἄν, ἀλλ᾽ ἄλλην τινὰ
τούτῳ πρέπουσαν μηχανὴν προσοιστέον.

Τοξότης

μιαρὸς ἀλώπηξ, οἷον ἐπιτήκιζί μοι.

Μνησίλοχος

μέμνησο Περσεῦ μ᾽ ὡς καταλείπεις ἀθλίαν.

Τοξότης

ἔτι γὰρ σὺ τὴ μάστιγαν ἐπιτυμεῖς λαβεῖν;

Χορός

Παλλάδα τὴν φιλόχορον ἐμοὶ
δεῦρο καλεῖν νόμος ἐς χορόν,
παρθένον ἄζυγα κούρην, **Χορός**

ἣ πόλιν ἡμετέραν ἔχει
καὶ κράτος φανερὸν μόνη
κληδοῦχός τε καλεῖται. **Χορός**

φάνηθ᾽ ὦ τυράννους
στυγοῦσ᾽ ὥσπερ εἰκός. **Χορός**

δῆμός τοί σε καλεῖ γυναικῶν:
ἔχουσα δέ μοι μόλοις
εἰρήνην φιλέορτον. **Χορός**

ἥκετ᾽ εὔφρονες ἴλαοι,
πότνιαι, ἄλσος ἐς ὑμέτερον,
οὗ δὴ ἀνδράσιν οὐ θέμις εἰσορᾶν
ὄργια σεμνὰ θεοῖν, ἵνα λαμπάσι
φαίνετον ἄμβροτον ὄψιν.
μόλετον ἔλθετον, ἀντόμεθ᾽ ὦ
Θεσμοφόρω πολυποτνία, **Χορός**

εἰ καὶ πρότερόν ποτ᾽ ἐπηκόω
ἦλθετον, ἔλθετε νῦν, ἀφίκεσθ᾽ ἱκετεύομεν
ἐνθάδε χἠμῖν. **Εὐριπίδης**

γυναῖκες εἰ βούλεσθε τὸν λοιπόν χρόνον
σπονδὰς ποιήσασθαι πρὸς ἐμέ, νυνὶ πάρα,
ἐφ᾽ ᾧτ᾽ ἀκοῦσαι μηδὲν ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ μηδαμὰ
κακὸν τὸ λοιπόν. ταῦτ᾽ ἐπικηρυκεύομαι.

Χορός

χρείᾳ δὲ ποίᾳ τόνδ᾽ ἐπεσφέρεις λόγον;

Εὐριπίδης

ὅδ᾽ ἐστὶν οὑν τῇ σανίδι κηδεστὴς ἐμός.
ἢν οὖν κομίσωμαι τοῦτον, οὐδὲν μή ποτε
κακῶς ἀκούσητ᾽: ἢν δὲ μὴ πίθησθέ μοι,
ἃ νῦν ὑποικουρεῖτε τοῖσιν ἀνδράσιν
ἀπὸ τῆς στρατιᾶς παροῦσιν ὑμῶν διαβαλῶ.

Χορός

τὰ μὲν παρ᾽ ἡμῶν ἴσθι σοι πεπεισμένα:
τὸν βάρβαρον δὲ τοῦτον αὐτὸς πεῖθε σύ.

Εὐριπίδης

ἐμὸν ἔργον ἐστίν: καὶ σὸν ὦλάφιον ἅ σοι
καθ᾽ ὁδὸν ἔφραζον ταῦτα μεμνῆσθαι ποιεῖν.
πρῶτον μὲν οὖν δίελθε κἀνακάλπασον.
σὺ δ᾽ ὦ Τερηδὼν ἐπαναφύσα Περσικόν.

Τοξότης

τί τὸ βόμβο τοῦτο; κῶμο τίς ἀνεγεῖρί μοι

Εὐριπίδης

ἡ παῖς ἔμελλε προμελετᾶν ὦ τοξότα.
ὀρχησομένη γὰρ ἔρχεθ᾽ ὡς ἄνδρας τινάς.

Τοξότης

ὀρκῆσι καὶ μελετῆσι, οὐ κωλύσ᾽ ἐγώ.
ὡς ἐλαπρός, ὥσπερ ψύλλο κατὰ τὸ κῴδιο.

Εὐριπίδης

φέρε θοἰμάτιον ἄνωθεν ὦ τέκνον τοδί:
καθιζομένη δ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῖσι γόνασι τοῦ Σκύθου
τὼ πόδε πρότεινον, ἵν᾽ ὑπολύσω.

Τοξότης
ναῖκι ναὶ
κάτησο κάτησο, ναῖκι ναῖκι τυγάτριον.
οἴμ᾽ ὡς στέριπο τὸ τιττΐ, ὥσπερ γογγύλη.

Εὐριπίδης

αὔλει σὺ θᾶττον: ἔτι δέδοικας τὸν Σκύθην;

Τοξότης

καλό γε τὸ πυγή. κλαῦσί γ᾽ ἂν μὴ ‘νδον μένῃς.
ἀνακύπτι καὶ παρακύπτι ἀπεψωλημένος:
εἶεν: καλὴ τὸ σκῆμα περὶ τὸ πόστιον.

Εὐριπίδης

καλῶς ἔχει. λαβὲ θοἰμάτιον: ὥρα ‘στὶ νῷν
ἤδη βαδίζειν.

Τοξότης
οὐκὶ πιλῆσι πρῶτά με;

Εὐριπίδης

πάνυ γε: φίλησον αὐτόν.

Τοξότης
ὃ ὃ ὃ παπαπαπαῖ,
ὡς γλυκερὸ τὸ γλῶσσ᾽, ὥσπερ Ἀττικὸς μέλις.
τί οὐ κατεύδει παρ᾽ ἐμέ;

Εὐριπίδης
χαῖρε τοξότα,
οὐ γὰρ γένοιτ᾽ ἂν τοῦτο.

Τοξότης
ναὶ ναὶ γρᾴδιο.
ἐμοὶ κάρισο σὺ τοῦτο.

Εὐριπίδης
δώσεις οὖν δραχμήν;

Τοξότης

1195 ναὶ ναῖκι δῶσι.

Εὐριπίδης
τἀργύριον τοίνυν φέρε.

Τοξότης

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔκὠδέν: ἀλλὰ τὸ συβήνην λαβέ.

Εὐριπίδης

ἔπειτα † κομίζεις αὐτοῖς.†

Τοξότης
ἀκολούτι τέκνον.

σὺ δὲ τοῦτο τήρει τὴ γέροντο, γράδιο.
ὄνομα δέ σοι τί ἔστιν;

Εὐριπίδης
Ἀρτεμισία.

Τοξότης

μεμνῆσι τοίνυν τοὔνομ᾽: Ἀρταμουξία.

Εὐριπίδης

Ἑρμῆ δόλιε ταυτὶ μὲν ἔτι καλῶς ποιεῖς.
σὺ μὲν οὖν ἀπότρεχε παιδάριον τουτὶ λαβών:
ἐγὼ δὲ λύσω τόνδε. σὺ δ᾽ ὅπως ἀνδρικῶς
ὅταν λυθῇς τάχιστα θεύξει καὶ τενεῖς
ὡς τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ παιδί᾽ οἴκαδε.

Μνησίλοχος

ἐμοὶ μελήσει ταῦτά γ᾽ ἢν ἅπαξ λυθῶ.

Εὐριπίδης

λέλυσο. σὸν ἔργον, φεῦγε πρὶν τὸν τοξότην
ἥκοντα καταλαβεῖν.

Μνησίλοχος
ἐγὼ δὴ τοῦτο δρῶ.

Τοξότης

ὦ γράδι᾽ ὡς καρίεντό σοι τὸ τυγάτριον,
κοὐ δύσκολ᾽ ἀλλὰ πρᾶο. ποῦ τὸ γράδιο;
οἴμ᾽ ὡς ἀπόλωλο: ποῦ τὸ γέροντ᾽ ἐντευτενί;
ὦ γράδι᾽, ὦ γρᾶ. οὐκ ἐπαινῶ γράδιο.
Ἀρταμουξία.
διέβαλλέ μ᾽ η᾽ γραῦς. ἀπότρεκ᾽ ὡς τάκιστα σύ:
ὀρτῶς δὲ συβήνη ‘στί: καταβηνῆσι γάρ.
οἴμοι,

τί δρᾶσι; ποῖ τὸ γράδι᾽; Ἀρταμουξία.

Χορός

τὴν γραῦν ἐρωτᾷς, ἢ ‘φερεν τὰς πηκτίδας;

Τοξότης

ναὶ ναῖκι. εἶδες αὐτό;

Χορός
ταύτῃ γ᾽ οἴχεται
αὐτή τ᾽ ἐκείνη καὶ γέρων τις εἵπετο.

Τοξότης

κροκῶτ᾽ ἔκοντο τὴ γέροντο;

Χορός
φήμ᾽ ἐγώ.
ἔτ᾽ ἂν καταλάβοις, εἰ διώκοις ταυτηί.

Τοξότης

ὦ μιαρὸ γρᾶο: πότερα τρέξι τὴν ὁδό;
Ἀρταμουξία.

Χορός

ὀρθὴν ἄνω δίωκε. ποῖ θεῖς; οὐ πάλιν
τηδὶ διώξει; σ᾽ τοὔμπαλιν τρέχεις σύ γε.

Τοξότης

κακόδαιμον, ἀλλὰ τρέξι. Ἀρταμουξία.

Χορός

τρέχε νυν κατὰ τοὺς κόρακας ἐπουρίσας, τρέχε.
ἀλλὰ πέπαισται μετρίως ἡμῖν:

ὥσθ᾽ ὥρα δή ‘στι βαδίζειν
οἴκαδ᾽ ἑκάστῃ. τὼ Θεσμοφόρω δ᾽
ἡμῖν ἀγαθὴν
τούτων χάριν ἀνταποδοίτην.

THE FROGS

Ἡρακλῆς

τίς τὴν θύραν ἐπάταξεν; ὡς κενταυρικῶς
ἐνήλαθ᾽ ὅστις: εἰπέ μοι τουτὶ τί ἦν;

Διόνυσος

ὁ παῖς.

Ξανθίας
τί ἔστιν;

Διόνυσος
οὐκ ἐνεθυμήθης;

Ξανθίας
τὸ τί;

Διόνυσος

ὡς σφόδρα μ᾽ ἔδεισε.

Ξανθίας
νὴ Δία μὴ μαίνοιό γε.

Ἡρακλῆς

οὔ τοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα δύναμαι μὴ γελᾶν:
καίτοι δάκνω γ᾽ ἐμαυτόν: ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως γελῶ.

Διόνυσος

ὦ δαιμόνιε πρόσελθε: δέομαι γάρ τί σου.

Ἡρακλῆς

ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ οἷός τ᾽ εἴμ᾽ ἀποσοβῆσαι τὸν γέλων

ὁρῶν λεοντῆν ἐπὶ κροκωτῷ κειμένην.
τίς ὁ νοῦς; τί κόθορνος καὶ ῥόπαλον ξυνηλθέτην;
ποῖ γῆς ἀπεδήμεις; **Διόνυσος**
ἐπεβάτευον Κλεισθένει-

Ἡρακλῆς

κἀναυμάχησας;

Διόνυσος
καὶ κατεδύσαμέν γε ναῦς
τῶν πολεμίων ἢ δώδεκ᾽ ἢ τρεῖς καὶ δέκα.

Ἡρακλῆς

σφώ;

Διόνυσος
νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω.

Ξανθίας
κᾆτ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ ἐξηγρόμην.

Διόνυσος

καὶ δῆτ᾽ ἐπὶ τῆς νεὼς ἀναγιγνώσκοντί μοι
τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν ἐξαίφνης πόθος
τὴν καρδίαν ἐπάταξε πῶς οἴει σφόδρα.

Ἡρακλῆς

πόθος; πόσος τις;

Διόνυσος
μικρὸς ἡλίκος Μόλων.

Ἡρακλῆς

γυναικός;

Διόνυσος
οὐ δῆτ᾽.

Ἡρακλῆς
ἀλλὰ παιδός; **Διόνυσος**
οὐδαμῶς.

Ἡρακλῆς

ἀλλ᾽ ἀνδρός;

Διόνυσος
ἀπαπαί.

Ἡρακλῆς
ξυνεγένου τῷ Κλεισθένει; **Διόνυσος**

μὴ σκῶπτέ μ᾽ ὦδέλφ᾽: οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ᾽ ἔχω κακῶς:
τοιοῦτος ἵμερός με διαλυμαίνεται.

Ἡρακλῆς

60 ποῖός τις ὦδελφίδιον;

Διόνυσος
οὐκ ἔχω φράσαι.
ὅμως γε μέντοι σοι δι᾽ αἰνιγμῶν ἐρῶ.
ἤδη ποτ᾽ ἐπεθύμησας ἐξαίφνης ἔτνους; **Ἡρακλῆς**

ἔτνους; βαβαιάξ, μυριάκις γ᾽ ἐν τῷ βίῳ.

Διόνυσος

ἆρ᾽ ἐκδιδάσκω τὸ σαφὲς ἢ ‘τέρᾳ φράσω;

Ἡρακλῆς

65 μὴ δῆτα περὶ ἔτνους γε: πάνυ γὰρ μανθάνω.

Διόνυσος

τοιουτοσὶ τοίνυν με δαρδάπτει πόθος
Εὐριπίδου.

Ἡρακλῆς
καὶ ταῦτα τοῦ τεθνηκότος; **Διόνυσος**

κοὐδείς γέ μ᾽ ἂν πείσειεν ἀνθρώπων τὸ μὴ οὐκ
ἐλθεῖν ἐπ᾽ ἐκεῖνον.

Ἡρακλῆς
πότερον εἰς Ἅιδου κάτω; **Διόνυσος**

καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ εἴ τί γ᾽ ἔστιν ἔτι κατωτέρω.

Ἡρακλῆς

τί βουλόμενος;

Διόνυσος
δέομαι ποιητοῦ δεξιοῦ.
οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὐκέτ᾽ εἰσίν, οἱ δ᾽ ὄντες κακοί.

Ἡρακλῆς

τί δ᾽; οὐκ Ἰοφῶν ζῇ;

Διόνυσος
τοῦτο γάρ τοι καὶ μόνον
ἔτ᾽ ἐστὶ λοιπὸν ἀγαθόν, εἰ καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἄρα:
οὐ γὰρ σάφ᾽ οἶδ᾽ οὐδ᾽ αὐτὸ τοῦθ᾽ ὅπως ἔχει.

Ἡρακλῆς

εἶτ᾽ οὐχὶ Σοφοκλέα πρότερον Εὐριπίδου
μέλλεις ἀναγαγεῖν, εἴπερ ἐκεῖθεν δεῖ σ᾽ ἄγειν; **Διόνυσος**

οὐ πρίν γ᾽ ἂν Ἰοφῶντ᾽, ἀπολαβὼν αὐτὸν μόνον,
ἄνευ Σοφοκλέους ὅ τι ποιεῖ κωδωνίσω.
κἄλλως ὁ μέν γ᾽ Εὐριπίδης πανοῦργος ὢν
κἂν ξυναποδρᾶναι δεῦρ᾽ ἐπιχειρήσειέ μοι:

ὁ δ᾽ εὔκολος μὲν ἐνθάδ᾽ εὔκολος δ᾽ ἐκεῖ.

Ἡρακλῆς

Ἀγάθων δὲ ποῦ ‘στιν;

Διόνυσος
ἀπολιπών μ᾽ ἀποίχεται,
ἀγαθὸς ποιητὴς καὶ ποθεινὸς τοῖς φίλοις.

Ἡρακλῆς

85 ποῖ γῆς ὁ τλήμων;

Διόνυσος
ἐς Μακάρων εὐωχίαν.

Ἡρακλῆς

ὁ δὲ Σενοκλέης;

Διόνυσος
ἐξόλοιτο νὴ Δία.

Ἡρακλῆς

Πυθάγγελος δέ;

Ξανθίας
περὶ ἐμοῦ δ᾽ οὐδεὶς λόγος
ἐπιτριβομένου τὸν ὦμον οὑτωσὶ σφόδρα.

Ἡρακλῆς

οὔκουν ἕτερ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐνταῦθα μειρακύλλια
90 τραγῳδίας ποιοῦντα πλεῖν ἢ μύρια,
Εὐριπίδου πλεῖν ἢ σταδίῳ λαλίστερα.

Διόνυσος

ἐπιφυλλίδες ταῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ καὶ στωμύλματα,
χελιδόνων μουσεῖα, λωβηταὶ τέχνης,
ἃ φροῦδα θᾶττον, ἢν μόνον χορὸν λάβῃ,
ἅπαξ προσουρήσαντα τῇ τραγῳδίᾳ.
γόνιμον δὲ ποιητὴν ἂν οὐχ εὕροις ἔτι
ζητῶν ἄν, ὅστις ῥῆμα γενναῖον λάκοι.

Ἡρακλῆς

πῶς γόνιμον;

Διόνυσος
ὡδὶ γόνιμον, ὅστις φθέγξεται
τοιουτονί τι παρακεκινδυνευμένον,
αἰθέρα Διὸς δωμάτιον, ἢ χρόνου πόδα,
ἢ φρένα μὲν οὐκ ἐθέλουσαν ὀμόσαι καθ᾽ ἱερῶν,
γλῶτταν δ᾽ ἐπιορκήσασαν ἰδίᾳ τῆς φρενός.

Ἡρακλῆς

σὲ δὲ ταῦτ᾽ ἀρέσκει;

Διόνυσος
μᾶλλὰ πλεῖν ἢ μαίνομαι.

Ἡρακλῆς

ἦ μὴν κόβαλά γ᾽ ἐστίν, ὡς καὶ σοὶ δοκεῖ.

Διόνυσος

μὴ τὸν ἐμὸν οἴκει νοῦν: ἔχεις γὰρ οἰκίαν.

Ἡρακλῆς

καὶ μὴν ἀτεχνῶς γε παμπόνηρα φαίνεται.

Διόνυσος

δειπνεῖν με δίδασκε.

Ξανθίας
περὶ ἐμοῦ δ᾽ οὐδεὶς λόγος.

Διόνυσος

ἀλλ᾽ ὧνπερ ἕνεκα τήνδε τὴν σκευὴν ἔχων
ἦλθον κατὰ σὴν μίμησιν, ἵνα μοι τοὺς ξένους
τοὺς σοὺς φράσειας, εἰ δεοίμην, οἵσι σὺ
ἐχρῶ τόθ᾽, ἡνίκ᾽ ἐπὶ τὸν Κέρβερον,
τούτους φράσον μοι, λιμένας ἀρτοπώλια
πορνεῖ᾽ ἀναπαύλας ἐκτροπὰς κρήνας ὁδοὺς
πόλεις διαίτας πανδοκευτρίας, ὅπου
κόρεις ὀλίγιστοι.

Ξανθίας
περὶ ἐμοῦ δ᾽ οὐδεὶς λόγος.

Ἡρακλῆς

ὦ σχέτλιε τολμήσεις γὰρ ἰέναι καὶ σύ γε;

Διόνυσος

μηδὲν ἔτι πρὸς ταῦτ᾽, ἀλλὰ φράζε τῶν ὁδῶν
ὅπῃ τάχιστ᾽ ἀφιζόμεθ᾽ εἰς Ἅιδου κάτω:
καὶ μήτε θερμὴν μήτ᾽ ἄγαν ψυχρὰν φράσῃς.

Ἡρακλῆς

φέρε δὴ τίν᾽ αὐτῶν σοι φράσω πρώτην; τίνα;
μία μὲν γὰρ ἔστιν ἀπὸ κάλω καὶ θρανίου,
κρεμάσαντι σαυτόν.

Διόνυσος
παῦε, πνιγηρὰν λέγεις.

Ἡρακλῆς

ἀλλ᾽ ἔστιν ἀτραπὸς ξύντομος τετριμμένη
ἡ διὰ θυείας.

Διόνυσος
ἆρα κώνειον λέγεις;

Ἡρακλῆς

μάλιστά γε.

Διόνυσος
ψυχράν γε καὶ δυσχείμερον:
εὐθὺς γὰρ ἀποπήγνυσι τἀντικνήμια.

Ἡρακλῆς

βούλει κατάντη καὶ ταχεῖαν σοι φράσω;

Διόνυσος

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ὡς ὄντος γε μὴ βαδιστικοῦ.

Ἡρακλῆς

καθέρπυσόν νυν ἐς Κεραμεικόν.

Διόνυσος
κᾆτα τί;

Ἡρακλῆς

ἀναβὰς ἐπὶ τὸν πύργον τὸν ὑψηλόν —

Διόνυσος
τί δρῶ;

Ἡρακλῆς

ἀφιεμένην τὴν λαμπάδ᾽ ἐντεῦθεν θεῶ,
κἄπειτ᾽ ἐπειδὰν θῶσιν οἱ θεώμενοι
‘εἶναι,’ τόθ᾽ εἶναι καὶ σὺ σαυτόν.

Διόνυσος

ποῖ

Ἡρακλῆς
κάτω.

Διόνυσος

ἀλλ᾽ ἀπολέσαιμ᾽ ἂν ἐγκεφάλου θρίω δύο.
οὐκ ἂν βαδίσαιμι τὴν ὁδὸν ταύτην.

Ἡρακλῆς
τί δαί; **Διόνυσος**

ἥνπερ σὺ τότε κατῆλθες.

Ἡρακλῆς
ἀλλ᾽ ὁ πλοῦς πολύς.
εὐθὺς γὰρ ἐπὶ λίμνην μεγάλην ἥξεις πάνυ
ἄβυσσον.

Διόνυσος
εἶτα πῶς περαιωθήσομαι;

Ἡρακλῆς

ἐν πλοιαρίῳ τυννουτῴ σ᾽ ἀνὴρ γέρων
140 ναύτης διάξει δύ᾽ ὀβολὼ μισθὸν λαβών.

Διόνυσος

φεῦ,
ὡς μέγα δύνασθον πανταχοῦ τὼ δύ᾽ ὀβολώ.
πῶς ἠλθέτην κἀκεῖσε; **Ἡρακλῆς**
Θησεὺς ἤγαγεν.
μετὰ ταῦτ᾽ ὄφεις καὶ θηρί᾽ ὄψει μυρία
δεινότατα.

Διόνυσος
μή μ᾽ ἔκπληττε μηδὲ δειμάτου:
οὐ γάρ μ᾽ ἀποτρέψεις.

Ἡρακλῆς
εἶτα βόρβορον πολὺν
καὶ σκῶρ ἀείνων: ἐν δὲ τούτῳ κειμένους,
εἴ που ξένον τις ἠδίκησε πώποτε,
ἢ παῖδα κινῶν τἀργύριον ὑφείλετο,
ἢ μητέρ᾽ ἠλόασεν, ἢ πατρὸς γνάθον
ἐπάταξεν, ἢ ‘πίορκον ὅρκον ὤμοσεν,
ἢ Μορσίμου τις ῥῆσιν ἐξεγράψατο.

Διόνυσος

νὴ τοὺς θεούς ἐχρῆν γε πρὸς τούτοισι κεἰ
τὴν πυρρίχην τις ἔμαθε τὴν Κινησίου.

Ἡρακλῆς

ἐντεῦθεν αὐλῶν τίς σε περίεισιν πνοή,
ὄψει τε φῶς κάλλιστον ὥσπερ ἐνθάδε,
καὶ μυρρινῶνας καὶ θιάσους εὐδαίμονας
ἀνδρῶν γυναικῶν καὶ κρότον χειρῶν πολύν.

Διόνυσος

οὗτοι δὲ δὴ τίνες εἰσίν;

Ἡρακλῆς
οἱ μεμυημένοι — **Ξανθίας**

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἐγὼ γοῦν ὄνος ἄγω μυστήρια.
ἀτὰρ οὐ καθέξω ταῦτα τὸν πλείω χρόνον.

Ἡρακλῆς

οἵ σοι φράσουσ᾽ ἀπαξάπανθ᾽ ὧν ἂν δέῃ.
οὗτοι γὰρ ἐγγύτατα παρ᾽ αὐτὴν τὴν ὁδὸν
ἐπὶ ταῖσι τοῦ Πλούτωνος οἰκοῦσιν θύραις.
καὶ χαῖρε πόλλ᾽ ὦδελφέ.

Διόνυσος
νὴ Δία καὶ σύ γε

ὑγίαινε. σὺ δὲ τὰ στρώματ᾽ αὖθις λάμβανε.

Ξανθίας

πρὶν καὶ καταθέσθαι;

Διόνυσος
καὶ ταχέως μέντοι πάνυ.

Ξανθίας

μὴ δῆθ᾽, ἱκετεύω σ᾽, ἀλλὰ μίσθωσαί τινα
τῶν ἐκφερομένων, ὅστις ἐπὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἔρχεται.

Διόνυσος

ἐὰν δὲ μὴ εὕρω;

Ξανθίας
τότε μ᾽ ἄγειν.

Διόνυσος
καλῶς λέγεις.
καὶ γάρ τιν᾽ ἐκφέρουσι τουτονὶ νεκρόν,
οὗτος, σὲ λέγω μέντοι, σὲ τὸν τεθνηκότα:
ἄνθρωπε βούλει σκευάρι᾽ εἰς Ἅιδου φέρειν; **Νέκρος**

πόσ᾽ ἄττα;

Διόνυσος
ταυτί.

Νέκρος
δύο δραχμὰς μισθὸν τελεῖς;

Διόνυσος

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἔλαττον.

Νέκρος

ὑπάγεθ᾽ ὑμεῖς τῆς ὁδοῦ.

Διόνυσος

ἀνάμεινον ὦ δαιμόνι᾽, ἐὰν ξυμβῶ τί σοι.

Νέκρος

εἰ μὴ καταθήσεις δύο δραχμάς, μὴ διαλέγου.

Διόνυσος

λάβ᾽ ἐννέ᾽ ὀβολούς.

Νέκρος
ἀναβιοίην νυν πάλιν.

Ξανθίας

ὡς σεμνὸς ὁ κατάρατος: οὐκ οἰμώξεται;
ἐγὼ βαδιοῦμαι.

Διόνυσος
χρηστὸς εἶ καὶ γεννάδας.
χωρῶμεν ἐπὶ τὸ πλοῖον.

Χάρων
ὠὸπ παραβαλοῦ.

Ξανθίας

τουτὶ τί ἔστι;

Διόνυσος
τοῦτο; λίμνη νὴ Δία
αὕτη ‘στὶν ἣν ἔφραζε, καὶ πλοῖόν γ᾽ ὁρῶ.

Ξανθίας

νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ κἄστι γ᾽ ὁ Χάρων οὐτοσί.

Διόνυσος

χαῖρ᾽ ὦ Χάρων, χαῖρ᾽ ὦ Χάρων, χαῖρ᾽ ὦ Χάρων.

Χάρων

τίς εἰς ἀναπαύλας ἐκ κακῶν καὶ πραγμάτων;
τίς ἐς τὸ Λήθης πεδίον, ἢ σ᾽ Ὄνου πόκας,
ἢ σ᾽ Κερβερίους, ἢ σ᾽ κόρακας, ἢ ‘πὶ Ταίναρον; **Διόνυσος**

ἐγώ.

Χάρων
ταχέως ἔμβαινε.

Διόνυσος
ποῖ σχήσειν δοκεῖς;
ἐς κόρακας ὄντως; **Χάρων**
ναὶ μὰ Δία σοῦ γ᾽ οὕνεκα.
ἔσβαινε δή.

Διόνυσος
παῖ δεῦρο.

Χάρων
δοῦλον οὐκ ἄγω,
εἰ μὴ νεναυμάχηκε τὴν περὶ τῶν κρεῶν.

Ξανθίας

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ᾽ ἔτυχον ὀφθαλμιῶν.

Χάρων

οὔκουν περιθρέξει δῆτα τὴν λίμνην κύκλῳ;

Ξανθίας

ποῦ δῆτ᾽ ἀναμενῶ;

Χάρων
παρὰ τὸν Αὐαίνου λίθον
ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀναπαύλαις.

Διόνυσος
μανθάνεις;

Ξανθίας
πάνυ μανθάνω.
οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, τῷ ξυνέτυχον ἐξιών; **Χάρων**

κάθιζ᾽ ἐπὶ κώπην. εἴ τις ἔτι πλεῖ, σπευδέτω.
οὗτος τί ποιεῖς;

Διόνυσος
ὅ τι ποιῶ; τί δ᾽ ἄλλο γ᾽ ἢ
ἵζω ‘πὶ κώπην, οὗπερ ἐκέλευές με σύ; **Χάρων**

οὔκουν καθεδεῖ δῆτ᾽ ἐνθαδὶ γάστρων;

Διόνυσος
ἰδού.

Χάρων

οὔκουν προβαλεῖ τὼ χεῖρε κἀκτενεῖς;

Διόνυσος
ἰδού.

Χάρων

οὐ μὴ φλυαρήσεις ἔχων ἀλλ᾽ ἀντιβὰς
ἐλᾷς προθύμως;

Διόνυσος
κᾆτα πῶς δυνήσομαι
ἄπειρος ἀθαλάττωτος ἀσαλαμίνιος
ὢν εἶτ᾽ ἐλαύνειν; **Χάρων**
ῥᾳστ᾽: ἀκούσει γὰρ μέλη

κάλλιστ᾽, ἐπειδὰν ἐμβάλῃς ἅπαξ, **Διόνυσος**
τίνων;

Χάρων

βατράχων κύκνων θαυμαστά.

Διόνυσος
κατακέλευε δή.

Χάρων

ὦ ὀπὸπ ὦ ὀπόπ.

Βάτραχοι

βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ,
βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.
λιμναῖα κρηνῶν τέκνα,
ξύναυλον ὕμνων βοὰν
φθεγξώμεθ᾽, εὔγηρυν ἐμὰν ἀοιδάν,
κοὰξ κοάξ,
ἣν ἀμφὶ Νυσήιον
Διὸς Διόνυσον ἐν
Λίμναισιν ἰαχήσαμεν,
ἡνίχ᾽ ὁ κραιπαλόκωμος
τοῖς ἱεροῖσι Χύτροισι
χωρεῖ κατ᾽ ἐμὸν τέμενος λαῶν ὄχλος.
βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.

Διόνυσος

ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ ἀλγεῖν ἄρχομαι
τὸν ὄρρον ὦ κοὰξ κοάξ:
ὑμῖν δ᾽ ἴσως οὐδὲν μέλει.

Βάτραχοι

βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.

Διόνυσος

ἀλλ᾽ ἐξόλοισθ᾽ αὐτῷ κοάξ:
οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἢ κοάξ.

Βάτραχοι

εἰκότως γ᾽ ὦ πολλὰ πράττων.
ἐμὲ γὰρ ἔστερξαν εὔλυροί τε Μοῦσαι
καὶ κεροβάτας Πὰν ὁ καλαμόφθογγα παίζων:
προσεπιτέρπεται δ᾽ ὁ φορμικτὰς Ἀπόλλων,
ἕνεκα δόνακος, ὃν ὑπολύριον
ἔνυδρον ἐν λίμναις τρέφω.
βρεκεκεκὲξ κοάξ κοάξ.

Διόνυσος

ἐγὼ δὲ φλυκταίνας γ᾽ ἔχω,
χὠ πρωκτὸς ἰδίει πάλαι,
κᾆτ᾽ αὐτίκ᾽ ἐκκύψας ἐρεῖ — **Βάτραχοι**

βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.

Διόνυσος

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ φιλῳδὸν γένος
παύσασθε.

Βάτραχοι
μᾶλλον μὲν οὖν
φθεγξόμεσθ᾽, εἰ δή ποτ᾽ εὐηλίοις
ἐν ἀμέραισιν
ἠλάμεσθα διὰ κυπείρου
καὶ φλέω, χαίροντες ᾠδῆς
πολυκολύμβοισι μέλεσιν,
ἢ Διὸς φεύγοντες ὄμβρον
ἔνυδρον ἐν βυθῷ χορείαν
αἰόλαν ἐφθεγξάμεσθα
πομφολυγοπαφλάσμασιν.

Διόνυσος

βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.
τουτὶ παρ᾽ ὑμῶν λαμβάνω.

Βάτραχοι

δεινά τἄρα πεισόμεσθα.

Διόνυσος

δεινότερα δ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽, ἐλαύνων
εἰ διαρραγήσομαι.

Βάτραχοι

βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.

Διόνυσος

οἰμώζετ᾽: οὐ γάρ μοι μέλει.

Βάτραχοι

ἀλλὰ μὴν κεκραξόμεσθά γ᾽
ὁπόσον ἡ φάρυξ ἂν ἡμῶν
χανδάνῃ δι᾽ ἡμέρας.

Διόνυσος

βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.
τούτῳ γὰρ οὐ νικήσετε.

Βάτραχοι

οὐδὲ μὴν ἡμᾶς σὺ πάντως.

Διόνυσος

οὐδὲ μὴν ὑμεῖς γ᾽ ἐμὲ

οὐδέποτε: κεκράξομαι γὰρ
κἂν δέῃ δι᾽ ἡμέρας
βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ,
ἕως ἂν ὑμῶν ἐπικρατήσω τῷ κοάξ,
βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.

Διόνυσος

ἔμελλον ἄρα παύσειν ποθ᾽ ὑμᾶς τοῦ κοάξ.

Χάρων

ὦ παῦε παῦε, παραβαλοῦ τὼ κωπίω,
ἔκβαιν᾽, ἀπόδος τὸν ναῦλον.

Διόνυσος
ἔχε δὴ τὠβολώ.
ὁ Ξανθίας. ποῦ Ξανθίας; ἦ Ξανθία.

Ξανθίας

ἰαῦ.

Διόνυσος
βάδιζε δεῦρο.

Ξανθίας
χαῖρ᾽ ὦ δέσποτα.

Διόνυσος

τί ἔστι τἀνταυθοῖ;

Ξανθίας
σκότος καὶ βόρβορος.

Διόνυσος

κατεῖδες οὖν που τοὺς πατραλοίας αὐτόθι
καὶ τοὺς ἐπιόρκους, οὓς ἔλεγεν ἡμῖν; **Ξανθίας**

σὺ δ᾽ οὔ;

Διόνυσος

νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ ‘γωγε, καὶ νυνί γ᾽ ὁρῶ.
ἄγε δὴ τί δρῶμεν;

Ξανθίας
προϊέναι βέλτιστα νῷν,
ὡς οὗτος ὁ τόπος ἐστὶν οὗ τὰ θηρία
τὰ δείν᾽ ἔφασκ᾽ ἐκεῖνος.

Διόνυσος
ὡς οἰμώξεται.
ἠλαζονεύεθ᾽ ἵνα φοβηθείην ἐγώ,
εἰδώς με μάχιμον ὄντα φιλοτιμούμενος.
οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτω γαῦρόν ἐσθ᾽ ὡς Ἡρακλῆς.
ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ εὐξαίμην ἂν ἐντυχεῖν τινι
λαβεῖν τ᾽ ἀγώνισμ᾽ ἄξιόν τι τῆς ὁδοῦ.

Ξανθίας

νὴ τὸν Δία καὶ μὴν αἰσθάνομαι ψόφου τινός.

Διόνυσος

ποῦ ποῦ ‘στιν;

Ξανθίας
ἐξόπισθεν.

Διόνυσος
ἐξόπισθ᾽ ἴθι.

Ξανθίας

ἀλλ᾽ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ πρόσθε.

Διόνυσος
πρόσθε νυν ἴθι.

Ξανθίας

καὶ μὴν ὁρῶ νὴ τὸν Δία θηρίον μέγα.

Διόνυσος

ποῖόν τι;

Ξανθίας
δεινόν: παντοδαπὸν γοῦν γίγνεται
τοτὲ μέν γε βοῦς, νυνὶ δ᾽ ὀρεύς, τοτὲ δ᾽ αὖ γυνὴ
ὡραιοτάτη τις.

Διόνυσος
ποῦ ‘στι; φέρ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτὴν ἴω.

Ξανθίας

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ αὖ γυνή ‘στιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἤδη κύων.

Διόνυσος

Ἔμπουσα τοίνυν ἐστί.

Ξανθίας
πυρὶ γοῦν λάμπεται
ἅπαν τὸ πρόσωπον.

Διόνυσος
καὶ σκέλος χαλκοῦν ἔχει;

Ξανθίας

νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ, καὶ βολίτινον θάτερον,
σάφ᾽ ἴσθι.

Διόνυσος
ποῖ δῆτ᾽ ἂν τραποίμην;

Ξανθίας

ποῖ δ᾽ ἐγώ;

Διόνυσος

ἱερεῦ διαφύλαξόν μ᾽, ἵν᾽ ὦ σοι ξυμπότης.

Ξανθίας

ἀπολούμεθ᾽ ὦναξ Ἡράκλεις.

Διόνυσος
οὐ μὴ καλεῖς μ᾽
ὦνθρωφ᾽, ἱκετεύω, μηδὲ κατερεῖς τοὔνομα.

Ξανθίας

Διόνυσε τοίνυν.

Διόνυσος
τοῦτό γ᾽ ἧττον θατέρου.
ἴθ᾽ ᾗπερ ἔρχει.

Ξανθίας
δεῦρο δεῦρ᾽ ὦ δέσποτα.

Διόνυσος

τί δ᾽ ἔστι;

Ξανθίας
θάρρει: πάντ᾽ ἀγαθὰ πεπράγαμεν,
ἔξεστί θ᾽ ὥσπερ Ἡγέλοχος ἡμῖν λέγειν,
‘ἐκ κυμάτων γὰρ αὖθις αὖ γαλῆν ὁρῶ.’
ἤμπουσα φρούδη.

Διόνυσος
κατόμοσον.

Ξανθίας
νὴ τὸν Δία.

Διόνυσος

καῦθις κατόμοσον.

Ξανθίας
νὴ Δί᾽.

Διόνυσος
ὄμοσον.

Ξανθίας
νὴ Δία.

Διόνυσος

οἴμοι τάλας, ὡς ὠχρίασ᾽ αὐτὴν ἰδών.

Ξανθίας

ὀδὶ δὲ δείσας ὑπερεπυρρίασέ σου.

Διόνυσος

οἴμοι, πόθεν μοι τὰ κακὰ ταυτὶ προσέπεσεν;
τίν᾽ αἰτιάσομαι θεῶν μ᾽ ἀπολλύναι; **Ξανθίας**

αἰθέρα Διὸς δωμάτιον ἢ χρόνου πόδα;

αὐλεῖ τις ἔνδοθεν)

Διόνυσος

οὗτος.

Ξανθίας
τί ἔστιν;

Διόνυσος
οὐ κατήκουσας;

Ξανθίας
τίνος;

Διόνυσος

αὐλῶν πνοῆς.

Ξανθίας
ἔγωγε, καὶ δᾴδων γέ με
αὖρα τις εἰσέπνευσε μυστικωτάτη.

Διόνυσος

ἀλλ᾽ ἠρεμὶ πτήξαντες ἀκροασώμεθα.

Χορός

Ἴακχ᾽ ὦ Ἴακχε.
Ἴακχ᾽ ὦ Ἴακχε.

Ξανθίας

τοῦτ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ ὦ δέσποθ᾽: οἱ μεμυημένοι
ἐνταῦθά που παίζουσιν, οὓς ἔφραζε νῷν.
ᾄδουσι γοῦν τὸν Ἴακχον ὅνπερ Διαγόρας.

Διόνυσος

κἀμοὶ δοκοῦσιν. ἡσυχίαν τοίνυν ἄγειν
βέλτιστόν ἐσθ᾽, ἕως ἂν εἰδῶμεν σαφῶς.

Χορός

Ἴακχ᾽ ὦ πολυτίμητ᾽ ἐν ἕδραις ἐνθάδε ναίων,
Ἴακχ᾽ ὦ Ἴακχε,
ἐλθὲ τόνδ᾽ ἀνὰ λειμῶνα χορεύσων
ὁσίους ἐς θιασώτας,
πολύκαρπον μὲν τινάσσων
περὶ κρατὶ σῷ βρύοντα
στέφανον μύρτων, θρασεῖ δ᾽ ἐγκατακρούων

ποδὶ τὰν ἀκόλαστον
φιλοπαίγμονα τιμάν,
χαρίτων πλεῖστον ἔχουσαν μέρος, ἁγνάν, ἱερὰν
ὁσίοις μύσταις χορείαν. **Ξανθίας**

ὦ πότνια πολυτίμητε Δήμητρος κόρη,
ὡς ἡδύ μοι προσέπνευσε χοιρείων κρεῶν.

Διόνυσος

οὔκουν ἀτρέμ᾽ ἕξεις, ἤν τι καὶ χορδῆς λάβῃς;

Χορός

†ἔγειρε φλογέας λαμπάδας ἐν χερσὶ γὰρ ἥκει τινάσσων†,
Ἴακχ᾽ ὦ Ἴακχε,
νυκτέρου τελετῆς φωσφόρος ἀστήρ.
φλογὶ φέγγεται δὲ λειμών:
γόνυ πάλλεται γερόντων:
ἀποσείονται δὲ λύπας
χρονίους τ᾽ ἐτῶν παλαιῶν ἐνιαυτοὺς
ἱερᾶς ὑπὸ τιμᾶς.
σὺ δὲ λαμπάδι † φλέγων†
προβάδην ἔξαγ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀνθηρὸν ἔλειον δάπεδον
χοροποιὸν μάκαρ ἥβαν. **Χορός**

εὐφημεῖν χρὴ κἀξίστασθαι τοῖς ἡμετέροισι χοροῖσιν,
ὅστις ἄπειρος τοιῶνδε λόγων ἢ γνώμῃ μὴ καθαρεύει,
ἢ γενναίων ὄργια Μουσῶν μήτ᾽ εἶδεν μήτ᾽ ἐχόρευσεν,
μηδὲ Κρατίνου τοῦ ταυροφάγου γλώττης Βακχεῖ᾽ ἐτελέσθη,
ἢ βωμολόχοις ἔπεσιν χαίρει μὴ ν᾽ καιρῷ τοῦτο ποιοῦσιν,
ἢ στάσιν ἐχθρὰν μὴ καταλύει μηδ᾽ εὔκολός ἐστι πολίταις,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀνεγείρει καὶ ῥιπίζει κερδῶν ἰδίων ἐπιθυμῶν,
ἢ τῆς πόλεως χειμαζομένης ἄρχων καταδωροδοκεῖται,
ἢ προδίδωσιν φρούριον ἢ ναῦς, ἢ τἀπόρρητ᾽ ἀποπέμπει
ἐξ Αἰγίνης Θωρυκίων ὢν εἰκοστολόγος κακοδαίμων,
ἀσκώματα καὶ λίνα καὶ πίτταν διαπέμπων εἰς Ἐπίδαυρον,
ἢ χρήματα ταῖς τῶν ἀντιπάλων ναυσὶν παρέχειν τινὰ πείθει,
ἢ κατατιλᾷ τῶν Ἑκαταίων κυκλίοισι χοροῖσιν ὑπᾴδων,

ἢ τοὺς μισθοὺς τῶν ποιητῶν ῥήτωρ ὢν εἶτ᾽ ἀποτρώγει,
κωμῳδηθεὶς ἐν ταῖς πατρίοις τελεταῖς ταῖς τοῦ Διονύσου:
τούτοις αὐδῶ καὖθις ἀπαυδῶ καὖθις τὸ τρίτον μάλ᾽ ἀπαυδῶ
ἐξίστασθαι μύσταισι χοροῖς: ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ἀνεγείρετε μολπὴν
καὶ παννυχίδας τὰς ἡμετέρας αἳ τῇδε πρέπουσιν ἑορτῇ. **Χορός**

χώρει νυν πᾶς ἀνδρείως
ἐς τοὺς εὐανθεῖς κόλπους
λειμώνων ἐγκρούων
κἀπισκώπτων
καὶ παίζων καὶ χλευάζων,
ἠρίστηται δ᾽ ἐξαρκούντως. **Χορός**

ἀλλ᾽ ἔμβα χὤπως ἀρεῖς
τὴν Σώτειραν γενναίως
τῇ φωνῇ μολπάζων,
ἢ τὴν χώραν
σῴζειν φήσ᾽ ἐς τὰς ὥρας,
κἂν Θωρυκίων μὴ βούληται. **Χορός**

ἄγε νυν ἑτέραν ὕμνων ἰδέαν τὴν καρποφόρον βασίλειαν
Δήμητρα θεὰν ἐπικοσμοῦντες ζαθέαις μολπαῖς κελαδεῖτε. **Χορός**

Δήμητερ ἁγνῶν ὀργίων
ἄνασσα συμπαραστάτει,
καὶ σῷζε τὸν σαυτῆς χορόν,
καί μ᾽ ἀσφαλῶς πανήμερον
παῖσαί τε καὶ χορεῦσαι: **Χορός**

καὶ πολλὰ μὲν γέλοιά μ᾽ εἰ-
πεῖν, πολλὰ δὲ σπουδαῖα, καὶ
τῆς σῆς ἑορτῆς ἀξίως
παίσαντα καὶ σκώψαντα νικήσαντα
ταινιοῦσθαι. **Χορός**

ἄγ᾽ εἶα
νῦν καὶ τὸν ὡραῖον θεὸν παρακαλεῖτε δεῦρο
ᾠδαῖσι, τὸν ξυνέμπορον τῆσδε τῆς χορείας.

Χορός

Ἴακχε πολυτίμητε, μέλος ἑορτῆς
ἥδιστον εὑρών, δεῦρο συνακολούθει
πρὸς τὴν θεὸν
καὶ δεῖξον ὡς ἄνευ πόνου
πολλὴν ὁδὸν περαίνεις.
Ἴακχε φιλοχορευτὰ συμπρόπεμπέ με.

Χορός

σὺ γὰρ κατεσχίσω μὲν ἐπὶ γέλωτι
κἀπ᾽ εὐτελείᾳ τόδε τὸ σανδαλίσκον
καὶ τὸ ῥάκος,
κἀξηῦρες ὥστ᾽ ἀζημίους
παίζειν τε καὶ χορεύειν.
Ἴακχε φιλοχορευτὰ συμπρόπεμπέ με. **Χορός**

καὶ γὰρ παραβλέψας τι μειρακίσκης
νῦν δὴ κατεῖδον καὶ μάλ᾽ εὐπροσώπου
συμπαιστρίας
χιτωνίου παραρραγέν-
τος τιτθίον προκύψαν.
Ἴακχε φιλοχορευτὰ συμπρόπεμπέ με. **Διόνυσος**

ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀεί πως φιλακόλου-
θός εἰμι καὶ μετ᾽ αὐτῆς
παίζων χορεύειν βούλομαι.

Ξανθίας
κἄγωγε πρός.

Χορός

βούλεσθε δῆτα κοινῇ
σκώψωμεν Ἀρχέδημον;
ὃς ἑπτέτης ὢν οὐκ ἔφυσε φράτερας. **Χορός**

νυνὶ δὲ δημαγωγεῖ
ἐν τοῖς ἄνω νεκροῖσι,

425 κἀστὶν τὰ πρῶτα τῆς ἐκεῖ μοχθηρίας. **Χορός**

τὸν Κλεισθένους δ᾽ ἀκούω
ἐν ταῖς ταφαῖσι πρωκτὸν
τίλλειν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ σπαράττειν τὰς γνάθους: **Χορός**

κἀκόπτετ᾽ ἐγκεκυφώς,
430 κἄκλαε κἀκεκράγει
Σεβῖνον ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀναφλύστιος. **Χορός**

καὶ Καλλίαν γέ φασι
τοῦτον τὸν Ἱπποβίνου
κύσθου λεοντῆν ναυμαχεῖν ἐνημμένον. **Διόνυσος**

435 ἔχοιτ᾽ ἂν οὖν φράσαι νῷν
Πλούτων᾽ ὅπου ‘νθάδ᾽ οἰκεῖ;
ξένω γάρ ἐσμεν ἀρτίως ἀφιγμένω. **Χορός**

μηδὲν μακρὰν ἀπέλθῃς,
μηδ᾽ αὖθις ἐπανέρῃ με,
440 ἀλλ᾽ ἴσθ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτὴν θύραν ἀφιγμένος.

Διόνυσος

αἴροι᾽ ἂν αὖθις ὦ παῖ.

Ξανθίας

τουτὶ τί ἦν τὸ πρᾶγμα;
ἀλλ᾽ ἢ Διὸς Κόρινθος ἐν τοῖς στρώμασιν.

Χορός

χωρεῖτε
445 νῦν ἱερὸν ἀνὰ κύκλον θεᾶς, ἀνθοφόρον ἀν᾽ ἄλσος
παίζοντες οἷς μετουσία θεοφιλοῦς ἑορτῆς:
ἐγὼ δὲ σὺν ταῖσιν κόραις εἶμι καὶ γυναιξίν,
οὗ παννυχίζουσιν θεᾷ, φέγγος ἱερὸν οἴσων.

Χορός

χωρῶμεν ἐς πολυρρόδους
λειμῶνας ἀνθεμώδεις,
τὸν ἡμέτερον τρόπον
τὸν καλλιχορώτατον
παίζοντες, ὃν ὄλβιαι
Μοῖραι ξυνάγουσιν.

Χορός

μόνοις γὰρ ἡμῖν ἥλιος
καὶ φέγγος ἱλαρόν ἐστιν,
ὅσοι μεμυήμεθ᾽ εὐ-
σεβῆ τε διήγομεν
τρόπον περὶ τοὺς ξένους
καὶ τοὺς ἰδιώτας.

Διόνυσος

ἄγε δὴ τίνα τρόπον τὴν θύραν κόψω; τίνα;
πῶς ἐνθάδ᾽ ἄρα κόπτουσιν οὐπιχώριοι; **Ξανθίας**

οὐ μὴ διατρίψεις, ἀλλὰ γεύσει τῆς θύρας,
καθ᾽ Ἡρακλέα τὸ σχῆμα καὶ τὸ λῆμ᾽ ἔχων.

Διόνυσος

παῖ παῖ.

Ἄιακος
τίς οὗτος;

Διόνυσος
Ἡρακλῆς ὁ καρτερός.

Ἄιακος

ὦ βδελυρὲ κἀναίσχυντε καὶ τολμηρὲ σὺ
καὶ μιαρὲ καὶ παμμίαρε καὶ μιαρώτατε,
ὃς τὸν κύν᾽ ἡμῶν ἐξελάσας τὸν Κέρβερον
ἀπῆξας ἄγχων κἀποδρὰς ᾤχου λαβών,

ὃν ἐγὼ ‘φύλαττον. ἀλλὰ νῦν ἔχει μέσος:
τοία Στυγός σε μελανοκάρδιος πέτρα
Ἀχερόντιός τε σκόπελος αἱματοσταγὴς
φρουροῦσι, Κωκυτοῦ τε περίδρομοι κύνες,
ἔχιδνά θ᾽ ἑκατογκέφαλος, ἢ τὰ σπλάγχνα σου
διασπαράξει, πλευμόνων τ᾽ ἀνθάψεται
Ταρτησία μύραινα: τὼ νεφρὼ δέ σου
αὐτοῖσιν ἐντέροισιν ᾑματωμένω
διασπάσονται Γοργόνες Τειθράσιαι,
ἐφ᾽ ἃς ἐγὼ δρομαῖον ὁρμήσω πόδα.

Ξανθίας

οὗτος τί δέδρακας;

Διόνυσος
ἐγκέχοδα: κάλει θεόν.

Ξανθίας

ὦ καταγέλαστ᾽ οὔκουν ἀναστήσει ταχὺ
πρίν τινά σ᾽ ἰδεῖν ἀλλότριον; **Διόνυσος**
ἀλλ᾽ ὡρακιῶ.
ἀλλ᾽ οἶσε πρὸς τὴν καρδίαν μου σφογγιάν.

Ξανθίας

ἰδοὺ λαβέ, προσθοῦ.

Διόνυσος
ποῦ ‘στιν;

Ξανθίας
ὦ χρυσοῖ θεοὶ
ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἔχεις τὴν καρδίαν; **Διόνυσος**
δείσασα γὰρ
ἐς τὴν κάτω μου κοιλίαν καθείρπυσεν.

Ξανθίας

ὦ δειλότατε θεῶν σὺ κἀνθρώπων.

Διόνυσος
ἐγώ;
πῶς δειλὸς ὅστις σφογγιὰν ᾔτησά σε;
οὐκ ἂν ἕτερός γ᾽ αὖτ᾽ ἠργάσατ᾽ ἀνήρ.

Ξανθίας
ἀλλὰ τί;

Διόνυσος

κατέκειτ᾽ ἂν ὀσφραινόμενος, εἴπερ δειλὸς ἦν:
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀνέστην καὶ προσέτ᾽ ἀπεψησάμην.

Ξανθίας

ἀνδρεῖά γ᾽ ὦ Πόσειδον.

Διόνυσος
οἶμαι νὴ Δία.
σὺ δ᾽ οὐκ ἔδεισας τὸν ψόφον τῶν ῥημάτων
καὶ τὰς ἀπειλάς; **Ξανθίας**
οὐ μὰ Δί᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἐφρόντισα.

Διόνυσος

ἴθι νυν ἐπειδὴ λῃματίας κἀνδρεῖος εἶ,
σὺ μὲν γενοῦ ‘γὼ τὸ ῥόπαλον τουτὶ λαβὼν
καὶ τὴν λεοντῆν, εἴπερ ἀφοβόσπλαγχνος εἶ:
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἔσομαί σοι σκευοφόρος ἐν τῷ μέρει.

Ξανθίας

φέρε δὴ ταχέως αὖτ᾽: οὐ γὰρ ἀλλὰ πειστέον:
καὶ βλέψον ἐς τὸν Ἡρακλειοξανθίαν,
εἰ δειλὸς ἔσομαι καὶ κατὰ σὲ τὸ λῆμ᾽ ἔχων.

Διόνυσος

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἀληθῶς οὐκ Μελίτης μαστιγίας.
φέρε νυν ἐγὼ τὰ στρώματ᾽ αἴρωμαι ταδί.

Θεράπαινα

ὦ φίλταθ᾽ ἥκεις Ἡράκλεις; δεῦρ᾽ εἴσιθι.
ἡ γὰρ θεός σ᾽ ὡς ἐπύθεθ᾽ ἥκοντ᾽, εὐθέως
ἔπεττεν ἄρτους, ἦψε κατερεικτῶν χύτρας
ἔτνους δύ᾽ ἢ τρεῖς, βοῦν ἀπηνθράκιζ᾽ ὅλον,
πλακοῦντας ὤπτα κολλάβους. ἀλλ᾽ εἴσιθι.

Ξανθίας

κάλλιστ᾽, ἐπαινῶ.

Θεράπαινα
μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω οὐ μή σ᾽ ἐγὼ
περιόψομἀπελθόντ᾽, ἐπεί τοι καὶ κρέα
ἀνέβραττεν ὀρνίθεια, καὶ τραγήματα
ἔφρυγε, κῷνον ἀνεκεράννυ γλυκύτατον.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴσιθ᾽ ἅμ᾽ ἐμοί.

Ξανθίας
πάνυ καλῶς.

Θεράπαινα
ληρεῖς ἔχων
οὐ γάρ σ᾽ ἀφήσω. καὶ γὰρ αὐλητρίς γέ σοι
ἥδ᾽ ἔνδον ἔσθ᾽ ὡραιοτάτη κὠρχηστρίδες
ἕτεραι δύ᾽ ἢ τρεῖς.

Ξανθίας
πῶς λέγεις; ὀρχηστρίδες;

Θεράπαινα

ἠβυλλιῶσαι κἄρτι παρατετιλμέναι.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴσιθ᾽, ὡς ὁ μάγειρος ἤδη τὰ τεμάχη
ἔμελλ᾽ ἀφαιρεῖν χἠ τράπεζ᾽ εἰσήρετο.

Ξανθίας

ἴθι νυν φράσον πρώτιστα ταῖς ὀρχηστρίσιν
ταῖς ἔνδον οὔσαις αὐτὸς ὅτι εἰσέρχομαι.
ὁ παῖς ἀκολούθει δεῦρο τὰ σκεύη φέρων.

Διόνυσος

ἐπίσχες οὗτος. οὔ τί που σπουδὴν ποιεῖ,
ὁτιή σε παίζων Ἡρακλέα ‘νεσκεύασα;
οὐ μὴ φλυαρήσεις ἔχων ὦ Ξανθία,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀράμενος οἴσεις πάλιν τὰ στρώματα.

Ξανθίας

τί δ᾽ ἔστιν; οὔ τι πού μ᾽ ἀφελέσθαι διανοεῖ
ἅδωκας αὐτός;

Διόνυσος
οὐ τάχ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἤδη ποιῶ.
κατάθου τὸ δέρμα.

Ξανθίας
ταῦτ᾽ ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι
καὶ τοῖς θεοῖσιν ἐπιτρέπω.

Διόνυσος
ποίοις θεοῖς;
τὸ δὲ προσδοκῆσαί σ᾽ οὐκ ἀνόητον καὶ κενὸν
ὡς δοῦλος ὢν καὶ θνητὸς Ἀλκμήνης ἔσει; **Ξανθίας**

ἀμέλει καλῶς: ἔχ᾽ αὖτ᾽. ἴσως γάρ τοί ποτε
ἐμοῦ δεηθείης ἄν, εἰ θεὸς θέλοι.

Χορός

ταῦτα μὲν πρὸς ἀνδρός ἐστι
νοῦν ἔχοντος καὶ φρένας καὶ
πολλὰ περιπεπλευκότος,
μετακυλίνδειν αὐτὸν ἀεὶ

πρὸς τὸν εὖ πράττοντα τοῖχον
μᾶλλον ἢ γεγραμμένην
εἰκόν᾽ ἑστάναι, λαβόνθ᾽ ἓν
σχῆμα: τὸ δὲ μεταστρέφεσθαι
πρὸς τὸ μαλθακώτερον
δεξιοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός ἐστι
καὶ φύσει Θηραμένους.

Διόνυσος

οὐ γὰρ ἂν γέλοιον ἦν, εἰ
Ξανθίας μὲν δοῦλος ὢν ἐν
στρώμασιν Μιλησίοις
ἀνατετραμμένος κυνῶν ὀρ-
χηστρίδ᾽ εἶτ᾽ ᾔτησεν ἀμίδ᾽, ἐγὼ
δὲ πρὸς τοῦτον βλέπων
τοὐρεβίνθου ‘δραττόμην, οὗ-
τος δ᾽ ἅτ᾽ ὢν αὐτὸς πανοῦργος
εἶδε, κᾆτ᾽ ἐκ τῆς γνάθου
πὺξ πατάξας μοὐξέκοψε
τοῦ χοροῦ τοὺς προσθίους; **Πανδοκευτρία**

Πλαθάνη Πλαθάνη δεῦρ᾽ ἔλθ᾽, ὁ πανοῦργος οὑτοσί,
ὃς ἐς τὸ πανδοκεῖον εἰσελθών ποτε
ἐκκαίδεκ᾽ ἄρτους κατέφαγ᾽ ἡμῶν.

Πλαθάνη
νὴ Δία
ἐκεῖνος αὐτὸς δῆτα.

Ξανθίας
κακὸν ἥκει τινί.

Πανδοκευτρία

καὶ κρέα γε πρὸς τούτοισιν ἀνάβραστ᾽ εἴκοσιν
ἀν᾽ ἡμιωβολιαῖα.

Ξανθίας

δώσει τις δίκην.

Πανδοκευτρία

καὶ τὰ σκόροδα τὰ πολλά.

Διόνυσος
ληρεῖς ὦ γύναι
κοὐκ οἶσθ᾽ ὅ τι λέγεις.

Πανδοκευτρία
οὐ μὲν οὖν με προσεδόκας,
ὁτιὴ κοθόρνους εἶχες, ἂν γνῶναί σ᾽ ἔτι;
τί δαί; τὸ πολὺ τάριχος οὐκ εἴρηκά πω.

Πλαθάνη.

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐδὲ τὸν τυρόν γε τὸν χλωρὸν τάλαν,
ὃν οὗτος αὐτοῖς τοῖς ταλάροις κατήσθιεν

Πανδοκευτρία

κἄπειτ᾽ ἐπειδὴ τἀργύριον ἐπραττόμην,
ἔβλεψεν ἔς με δριμὺ κἀμυκᾶτό γε.

Ξανθίας

τούτου πάνυ τοὔργον: οὗτος ὁ τρόπος πανταχοῦ.

Πανδοκευτρία

καὶ τὸ ξίφος γ᾽ ἐσπᾶτο μαίνεσθαι δοκῶν.

Πλαθάνη

νὴ Δία τάλαινα.

Πανδοκευτρία
νὼ δὲ δεισάσα γέ που
ἐπὶ τὴν κατήλιφ᾽ εὐθὺς ἀνεπηδήσαμεν:

ὁ δ᾽ ᾤχετ᾽ ἐξάξας γε τὰς ψιάθους λαβών.

Ξανθίας

καὶ τοῦτο τούτου τοὔργον.

Πλαθάνη
ἀλλ᾽ ἐχρῆν τι δρᾶν.

Πανδοκευτρία

ἴθι δὴ κάλεσον τὸν προστάτην Κλέωνά μοι.

Πλαθάνη

σὺ δ᾽ ἔμοιγ᾽ ἐάνπερ ἐπιτύχῃς Ὑπέρβολον,
ἵν᾽ αὐτὸν ἐπιτρίψωμεν.

Πανδοκευτρία
ὦ μιαρὰ φάρυξ,
ὡς ἡδέως ἄν σου λίθῳ τοὺς γομφίους
κόπτοιμ᾽ ἄν, οἷς μου κατέφαγες τὰ φορτία.

Πλαθάνη

ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ ἐς τὸ βάραθρον ἐμβάλοιμί σε.

Πανδοκευτρία

ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν λάρυγγ᾽ ἂν ἐκτέμοιμί σου
δρέπανον λαβοῦσ᾽, ᾧ τὰς χόλικας κατέσπασας.

Πλαθάνη.

ἀλλ᾽ εἶμ᾽ ἐπὶ τὸν Κλέων᾽, ὃς αὐτοῦ τήμερον
ἐκπηνιεῖται ταῦτα προσκαλούμενος.

Διόνυσος

κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολοίμην, Ξανθίαν εἰ μὴ φιλῶ.

Ξανθίας

οἶδ᾽ οἶδα τὸν νοῦν: παῦε παῦε τοῦ λόγου.
οὐκ ἂν γενοίμην Ἡρακλῆς ἄν.

Διόνυσος
μηδαμῶς
ὦ Ξανθίδιον.

Ξανθίας
καὶ πῶς ἂν Ἀλκμήνης ἐγὼ
υἱὸς γενοίμην δοῦλος ἅμα καὶ θνητὸς ὤν; **Διόνυσος**

οἶδ᾽ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι θυμοῖ, καὶ δικαίως αὐτὸ δρᾷς:
κἂν εἴ με τύπτοις, οὐκ ἂν ἀντείποιμί σοι.
ἀλλ᾽ ἦν σε τοῦ λοιποῦ ποτ᾽ ἀφέλωμαι χρόνου,
πρόρριζος αὐτός, ἡ γυνή, τὰ παιδία,
κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολοίμην, κἀρχέδημος ὁ γλάμων.

Ξανθίας

δέχομαι τὸν ὅρκον κἀπὶ τούτοις λαμβάνω.

Χορός

νῦν σὸν ἔργον ἔστ᾽, ἐπειδὴ
τὴν στολὴν εἴληφας ἥνπερ
εἶχες ἐξ ἀρχῆς πάλιν,
ἀνανεάζειν ...
καὶ βλέπειν αὖθις τὸ δεινόν,
τοῦ θεοῦ μεμνημένον
ᾧπερ εἰκάζεις σεαυτόν.
εἰ δὲ παραληρῶν ἁλώσει
κἀκβαλεῖς τι μαλθακόν,
αὖθις αἴρεσθαί σ᾽ ἀνάγκη
‘σται πάλιν τὰ στρώματα.

Ξανθίας

οὐ κακῶς ὦνδρες παραινεῖτ᾽,

ἀλλὰ καὐτὸς τυγχάνω ταῦτ᾽
ἄρτι συννοούμενος.
ὅτι μὲν οὖν, ἢν χρηστὸν ᾖ τι,
ταῦτ᾽ ἀφαιρεῖσθαι πάλιν πειράσεταί
μ᾽ εὖ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως ἐγὼ παρέξω
‘μαυτὸν ἀνδρεῖον τὸ λῆμα
καὶ βλέποντ᾽ ὀρίγανον.
δεῖν δ᾽ ἔοικεν, ὡς ἀκούω
τῆς θύρας καὶ δὴ ψόφον.

Ἄιακος

ξυνδεῖτε ταχέως τουτονὶ τὸν κυνοκλόπον,
ἵνα δῷ δίκην: ἀνύετον.

Διόνυσος
ἥκει τῳ κακόν.

Ξανθίας

οὐκ ἐς κόρακας; μὴ πρόσιτον.

Ἄιακος
εἶεν, καὶ μάχει;
ὁ Διτύλας χὠ Σκεβλύας χὠ Παρδόκας
χωρεῖτε δευρὶ καὶ μάχεσθε τουτῳί.

Διόνυσος

εἶτ᾽ οὐχὶ δεινὰ ταῦτα, τύπτειν τουτονὶ
κλέπτοντα πρὸς τἀλλότρια; **Ἄιακος**
μἀλλ᾽ ὑπερφυᾶ.

Διόνυσος

σχέτλια μὲν οὖν καὶ δεινά.

Ξανθίας
καὶ μὴν νὴ Δία

εἰ πώποτ᾽ ἦλθον δεῦρ᾽, ἐθέλω τεθνηκέναι,
ἢ ‘κλεψα τῶν σῶν ἄξιόν τι καὶ τριχός.
καί σοι ποιήσω πρᾶγμα γενναῖον πάνυ:
βασάνιζε γὰρ τὸν παῖδα τουτονὶ λαβών,
κἄν ποτέ μ᾽ ἕλῃς ἀδικοῦντ᾽, ἀπόκτεινόν μ᾽ ἄγων.

Ἄιακος

καὶ πῶς βασανίσω;

Ξανθίας
πάντα τρόπον, ἐν κλίμακι
δήσας κρεμάσας ὑστριχίδι μαστιγῶν, δέρων,
στρεβλῶν, ἔτι δ᾽ ἐς τὰς ῥῖνας ὄξος ἐγχέων,
πλίνθους ἐπιτιθείς, πάντα τἄλλα, πλὴν πράσῳ
μὴ τύπτε τοῦτον μηδὲ γητείῳ νέῳ.

Ἄιακος

δίκαιος ὁ λόγος: κἄν τι πηρώσω γέ σου
τὸν παῖδα τύπτων, τἀργύριόν σοι κείσεται.

Ξανθίας

μὴ δῆτ᾽ ἔμοιγ᾽. οὕτω δὲ βασάνιζ᾽ ἀπαγαγών.

Ἄιακος

αὐτοῦ μὲν οὖν, ἵνα σοὶ κατ᾽ ὀφθαλμοὺς λέγῃ.
κατάθου σὺ τὰ σκεύη ταχέως, χὤπως ἐρεῖς
ἐνταῦθα μηδὲν ψεῦδος.

Διόνυσος
ἀγορεύω τινὶ
ἐμὲ μὴ βασανίζειν ἀθάνατον ὄντ᾽: εἰ δὲ μή,
αὐτὸς σεαυτὸν αἰτιῶ.

Ἄιακος
λέγεις δὲ τί;

Διόνυσος

ἀθάνατος εἶναί φημι Διόνυσος Διός,
τοῦτον δὲ δοῦλον.

Ἄιακος
ταῦτ᾽ ἀκούεις;

Ξανθίας
φήμ᾽ ἐγώ.
καὶ πολύ γε μᾶλλόν ἐστι μαστιγωτέος:
εἴπερ θεὸς γάρ ἐστιν, οὐκ αἰσθήσεται.

Διόνυσος

τί δῆτ᾽, ἐπειδὴ καὶ σὺ φὴς εἶναι θεός,
οὐ καὶ σὺ τύπτει τὰς ἴσας πληγὰς ἐμοί; **Ξανθίας**

δίκαιος ὁ λόγος: χὠπότερόν γ᾽ ἂν νῷν ἴδῃς
κλαύσαντα πρότερον ἢ προτιμήσαντά τι
τυπτόμενον, εἶναι τοῦτον ἡγοῦ μὴ θεόν.

Ἄιακος

οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως οὐκ εἶ σὺ γεννάδας ἀνήρ:
χωρεῖς γὰρ ἐς τὸ δίκαιον. ἀποδύεσθε δή.

Ξανθίας

πῶς οὖν βασανιεῖς νὼ δικαίως;

Ἄιακος
ῥᾳδίως:
πληγὴν παρὰ πληγὴν ἑκάτερον.

Ξανθίας
καλῶς λέγεις.

Ἄιακος

ἰδού.

Ξανθίας
σκόπει νυν ἤν μ᾽ ὑποκινήσαντ᾽ ἴδῃς.

Ἄιακος

ἤδη ‘πάταξά σ᾽.

Ξανθίας
οὐ μὰ Δί᾽.

Ἄιακος
οὐδ᾽ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς.
ἀλλ᾽ εἶμ᾽ ἐπὶ τονδὶ καὶ πατάξω.

Διόνυσος
πηνίκα;

Ἄιακος

καὶ δὴ ‘πάταξα.

Διόνυσος
κᾆτα πῶς οὐκ ἔπταρον;

Ἄιακος

οὐκ οἶδα: τουδὶ δ᾽ αὖθις ἀποπειράσομαι.

Ξανθίας

οὔκουν ἀνύσεις τι; ἀτταταῖ.

Ἄιακος
τί τἀτταταῖ;
μῶν ὠδυνήθης; **Ξανθίας**
οὐ μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἐφρόντισα
ὁπόθ᾽ Ἡράκλεια τἀν Διομείοις γίγνεται.

Ἄιακος

ἄνθρωπος ἱερός. δεῦρο πάλιν βαδιστέον.

Διόνυσος

ἰοὺ ἰού.

Ἄιακος
τί ἔστιν;

Διόνυσος
ἱππέας ὁρῶ.

Ἄιακος

τί δῆτα κλάεις;

Διόνυσος
κρομμύων ὀσφραίνομαι.

Ἄιακος

ἐπεὶ προτιμᾷς γ᾽ οὐδέν.

Διόνυσος
οὐδέν μοι μέλει.

Ἄιακος

βαδιστέον τἄρ᾽ ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τονδὶ πάλιν.

Ξανθίας

οἴμοι.

Ἄιακος
τί ἔστι;

Ξανθίας

τὴν ἄκανθαν ἐξελε.

Ἄιακος

τί τὸ πρᾶγμα τουτί; δεῦρο πάλιν βαδιστέον.

Διόνυσος

Ἄπολλον — ὅς που Δῆλον ἢ Πυθῶν᾽ ἔχεις.

Ξανθίας

ἤλγησεν: οὐκ ἤκουσας;

Διόνυσος
οὐκ ἔγωγ᾽, ἐπεὶ
ἴαμβον Ἱππώνακτος ἀνεμιμνῃσκόμην.

Ξανθίας

οὐδὲν ποιεῖς γάρ: ἀλλὰ τὰς λαγόνας σπόδει.

Ἄιακος

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἤδη πάρεχε τὴν γαστέρα.

Διόνυσος

Πόσειδον

Ξανθίας
ἤλγησέν τις.

Διόνυσος

ὃς Αἰγαίου πρῶνας ἢ γλαυκᾶς μέδεις ἁλὸς ἐν βένθεσιν.

Ἄιακος

οὔ τοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα δύναμαί πω μαθεῖν
ὁπότερος ὑμῶν ἐστι θεός. ἀλλ᾽ εἴσιτον:

ὁ δεσπότης γὰρ αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς γνώσεται
χὴ Φερρέφατθ᾽, ἅτ᾽ ὄντε κἀκείνω θεώ.

Διόνυσος

ὀρθῶς λέγεις: ἐβουλόμην δ᾽ ἂν τοῦτό σε
πρότερον νοῆσαι, πρὶν ἐμὲ τὰς πληγὰς λαβεῖν.

Χορός

Μοῦσα χορῶν ἱερῶν: ἐπίβηθι καὶ ἔλθ᾽ ἐπὶ τέρψιν ἀοιδᾶς ἐμᾶς,
τὸν πολὺν ὀψομένη λαῶν: ὄχλον, οὗ σοφίαι
μυρίαι κάθηνται
φιλοτιμότεραι Κλεοφῶντος, ἐφ᾽ οὗ δὴ χείλεσιν ἀμφιλάλοις
δεινὸν ἐπιβρέμεται
Θρῃκία χελιδὼν
†ἐπὶ βάρβαρον ἑζομένη πέταλον: †
κελαδεῖ δ᾽ ἐπίκλαυτον ἀηδόνιον νόμον, ὡς ἀπολεῖται,
κἂν ἴσαι γένωνται. **Χορός**

τὸν ἱερὸν χορὸν δίκαιόν ἐστι χρηστὰ τῇ πόλει
ξυμπαραινεῖν καὶ διδάσκειν. πρῶτον οὖν ἡμῖν δοκεῖ
ἐξισῶσαι τοὺς πολίτας κἀφελεῖν τὰ δείματα,
κεΐ τις ἥμαρτε σφαλείς τι Φρυνίχου παλαίσμασιν,
ἐγγενέσθαι φημὶ χρῆναι τοῖς ὀλισθοῦσιν τότε
αἰτίαν ἐκθεῖσι λῦσαι τὰς πρότερον ἁμαρτίας.
εἶτ᾽ ἄτιμόν φημι χρῆναι μηδέν᾽ εἶν᾽ ἐν τῇ πόλει:
καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρόν ἐστι τοὺς μὲν ναυμαχήσαντας μίαν
καὶ Πλαταιᾶς εὐθὺς εἶναι κἀντὶ δούλων δεσπότας.
κοὐδὲ ταῦτ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ ἔχοιμ᾽ ἂν μὴ οὐ καλῶς φάσκειν ἔχειν,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπαινῶ: μόνα γὰρ αὐτὰ νοῦν ἔχοντ᾽ ἐδράσατε.
πρὸς δὲ τούτοις εἰκὸς ὑμᾶς, οἳ μεθ᾽ ὑμῶν πολλὰ δὴ
χοἱ πατέρες ἐναυμάχησαν καὶ προσήκουσιν γένει,
τὴν μίαν ταύτην παρεῖναι ξυμφορὰν αἰτουμένοις.
ἀλλὰ τῆς ὀργῆς ἀνέντες ὦ σοφώτατοι φύσει
πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἑκόντες συγγενεῖς κτησώμεθα
κἀπιτίμους καὶ πολίτας, ὅστις ἂν ξυνναυμαχῇ.
εἰ δὲ ταῦτ᾽ ὀγκωσόμεσθα κἀποσεμνυνούμεθα,
τὴν πόλιν καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἔχοντες κυμάτων ἐν ἀγκάλαις,

ὑστέρῳ χρόνῳ ποτ᾽ αὖθις εὖ φρονεῖν οὐ δόξομεν. **Χορός**

εἰ δ᾽ ἐγὼ ὀρθὸς ἰδεῖν βίον ἀνέρος ἢ τρόπον ὅστις ἔτ᾽
οἰμώξεται,
οὐ πολὺν οὐδ᾽ ὁ πίθηκος οὗτος ὁ νῦν ἐνοχλῶν,
Κλειγένης ὁ μικρός,
ὁ πονηρότατος βαλανεὺς ὁπόσοι κρατοῦσι κυκησιτέφρου
ψευδολίτρου κονίας
καὶ Κιμωλίας γῆς,
χρόνον ἐνδιατρίψει: ἰδὼν δὲ τάδ᾽ οὐκ
εἰρηνικὸς ἔσθ᾽, ἵνα μή ποτε κἀποδυθῇ μεθύων ἄνευ
ξύλου βαδίζων. **Χορός**

πολλάκις γ᾽ ἡμῖν ἔδοξεν ἡ πόλις πεπονθέναι
ταὐτὸν ἔς τε τῶν πολιτῶν τοὺς καλούς τε κἀγαθοὺς
ἔς τε τἀρχαῖον νόμισμα καὶ τὸ καινὸν χρυσίον.
οὔτε γὰρ τούτοισιν οὖσιν οὐ κεκιβδηλευμένοις,
ἀλλὰ καλλίστοις ἁπάντων, ὡς δοκεῖ, νομισμάτων
καὶ μόνοις ὀρθῶς κοπεῖσι καὶ κεκωδωνισμένοις
ἔν τε τοῖς Ἕλλησι καὶ τοῖς βαρβάροισι πανταχοῦ
χρώμεθ᾽ οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ τούτοις τοῖς πονηροῖς χαλκίοις
χθές τε καὶ πρώην κοπεῖσι τῷ κακίστῳ κόμματι.
τῶν πολιτῶν θ᾽ οὓς μὲν ἴσμεν εὐγενεῖς καὶ σώφρονας
ἄνδρας ὄντας καὶ δικαίους καὶ καλούς τε κἀγαθοὺς
καὶ τραφέντας ἐν παλαίστραις καὶ χοροῖς καὶ μουσικῇ,
προυσελοῦμεν, τοῖς δὲ χαλκοῖς καὶ ξένοις καὶ πυρρίαις
καὶ πονηροῖς κἀκ πονηρῶν εἰς ἅπαντα χρώμεθα
ὑστάτοις ἀφιγμένοισιν, οἷσιν ἡ πόλις πρὸ τοῦ
οὐδὲ φαρμακοῖσιν εἰκῇ ῥᾳδίως ἐχρήσατ᾽ ἄν.
ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν ὦνόητοι μεταβαλόντες τοὺς τρόπους
χρῆσθε τοῖς χρηστοῖσιν αὖθις: καὶ κατορθώσασι γὰρ
εὔλογον, κἄν τι σφαλῆτ᾽, ἐξ ἀξίου γοῦν τοῦ ξύλου,
ἤν τι καὶ πάσχητε, πάσχειν τοῖς σοφοῖς δοκήσετε. **Ἄιακος**

νὴ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτῆρα γεννάδας ἀνὴρ
ὁ δεσπότης σου.

Ξανθίας
πῶς γὰρ οὐχὶ γεννάδας,

ὅστις γε πίνειν οἶδε καὶ βινεῖν μόνον; **Ἄιακος**

τὸ δὲ μὴ πατάξαι σ᾽ ἐξελεγχθέντ᾽ ἄντικρυς,
ὅτι δοῦλος ὢν ἔφασκες εἶναι δεσπότης.

Ξανθίας

ᾤμωξε μέντἄν.

Ἄιακος
τοῦτο μέντοι δουλικὸν
εὐθὺς πεποίηκας, ὅπερ ἐγὼ χαίρω ποιῶν.

Ξανθίας

χαίρεις, ἱκετεύω;

Ἄιακος
μᾶλλ᾽ ἐποπτεύειν δοκῶ,
ὅταν καταράσωμαι λάθρᾳ τῷ δεσπότῃ.

Ξανθίας

τί δὲ τονθορύζων, ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν πληγὰς λαβὼν
πολλὰς ἀπίῃς θύραζε;

Ἄιακος
καὶ τοῦθ᾽ ἥδομαι.

Ξανθίας

τί δὲ πολλὰ πράττων;

Ἄιακος
ὡς μὰ Δί᾽ οὐδὲν οἶδ᾽ ἐγώ.

Ξανθίας

ὁμόγνιε Ζεῦ: καὶ παρακούων δεσποτῶν
ἄττ᾽ ἂν λαλῶσι;

Ἄιακος
μἀλλὰ πλεῖν ἢ μαίνομαι.

Ξανθίας

τί δὲ τοῖς θύραζε ταῦτα καταλαλῶν;

Ἄιακος
ἐγώ;
μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν δρῶ τοῦτο, κἀκμιαίνομαι.

Ξανθίας

ὦ Φοῖβ᾽ Ἄπολλον ἔμβαλέ μοι τὴν δεξιάν,
καὶ δὸς κύσαι καὐτὸς κύσον, καί μοι φράσον
πρὸς Διός, ὃς ἡμῖν ἐστιν ὁμομαστιγίας,
τίς οὗτος οὕνδον ἐστὶ θόρυβος καὶ βοὴ
χὠ λοιδορησμός; **Ἄιακος**
Αἰσχύλου κεὐριπίδου.

Ξανθίας

ἆ.

Ἄιακος
πρᾶγμα πρᾶγμα μέγα κεκίνηται μέγα
ἐν τοῖς νεκροῖσι καὶ στάσις πολλὴ πάνυ.

Ξανθίας

ἐκ τοῦ;

Ἄιακος
νόμος τις ἐνθάδ᾽ ἐστὶ κείμενος
ἀπὸ τῶν τεχνῶν ὅσαι μεγάλαι καὶ δεξιαί,
τὸν ἄριστον ὄντα τῶν ἑαυτοῦ συντέχνων
σίτησιν αὐτὸν ἐν πρυτανείῳ λαμβάνειν
θρόνον τε τοῦ Πλούτωνος ἑξῆς — **Ξανθίας**
μανθάνω.

Ἄιακος

ἕως ἀφίκοιτο τὴν τέχνην σοφώτερος
ἕτερός τις αὐτοῦ: τότε δὲ παραχωρεῖν ἔδει.

Ξανθίας

τί δῆτα τουτὶ τεθορύβηκεν Αἰσχύλον;

Ἄιακος

ἐκεῖνος εἶχε τὸν τραγῳδικὸν θρόνον,
ὡς ὢν κράτιστος τὴν τέχνην.

Ξανθίας
νυνὶ δὲ τίς;

Ἄιακος

ὅτε δὴ κατῆλθ᾽ Εὐριπίδης, ἐπεδείκνυτο
τοῖς λωποδύταις καὶ τοῖσι βαλλαντιοτόμοις
καὶ τοῖσι πατραλοίαισι καὶ τοιχωρύχοις,
ὅπερ ἔστ᾽ ἐν Ἅιδου πλῆθος, οἱ δ᾽ ἀκροώμενοι
τῶν ἀντιλογιῶν καὶ λυγισμῶν καὶ στροφῶν
ὑπερεμάνησαν κἀνόμισαν σοφώτατον:
κἄπειτ᾽ ἐπαρθεὶς ἀντελάβετο τοῦ θρόνου,
ἵν᾽ Αἰσχύλος καθῆστο.

Ξανθίας
κοὐκ ἐβάλλετο;

Ἄιακος

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ὁ δῆμος ἀνεβόα κρίσιν ποιεῖν
ὁπότερος εἴη τὴν τέχνην σοφώτερος.

Ξανθίας

ὁ τῶν πανούργων;

Ἄιακος
νὴ Δί᾽ οὐράνιόν γ᾽ ὅσον.

Ξανθίας

μετ᾽ Αἰσχύλου δ᾽ οὐκ ἦσαν ἕτεροι σύμμαχοι;

Ἄιακος

ὀλίγον τὸ χρηστόν ἐστιν, ὥσπερ ἐνθάδε.

Ξανθίας

τί δῆθ᾽ ὁ Πλούτων δρᾶν παρασκευάζεται;

Ἄιακος

ἀγῶνα ποιεῖν αὐτίκα μάλα καὶ κρίσιν
κἄλεγχον αὐτῶν τῆς τέχνης.

Ξανθίας
κἄπειτα πῶς
οὐ καὶ Σοφοκλέης ἀντελάβετο τοῦ θρόνου; **Ἄιακος**

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐκ ἐκεῖνος, ἀλλ᾽ ἔκυσε μὲν Αἰσχύλον,
ὅτε δὴ κατῆλθε, κἀνέβαλε τὴν δεξιάν,
κἀκεῖνος ὑπεχώρησεν αὐτῷ τοῦ θρόνου:
νυνὶ δ᾽ ἔμελλεν, ὡς ἔφη Κλειδημίδης,
ἕφεδρος καθεδεῖσθαι: κἂν μὲν Αἰσχύλος κρατῇ,
ἕξειν κατὰ χώραν: εἰ δὲ μή, περὶ τῆς τέχνης
διαγωνιεῖσθ᾽ ἔφασκε πρός γ᾽ Εὐριπίδην.

Ξανθίας

τὸ χρῆμ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔσται;

Ἄιακος
νὴ Δί᾽ ὀλίγον ὕστερον.
κἀνταῦθα δὴ τὰ δεινὰ κινηθήσεται.
καὶ γὰρ ταλάντῳ μουσικὴ σταθμήσεται — **Ξανθίας**

τί δέ; μειαγωγήσουσι τὴν τραγῳδίαν;

Ἄιακος

καὶ κανόνας ἐξοίσουσι καὶ πήχεις ἐπῶν
καὶ πλαίσια ξύμπτυκτα — **Ξανθία**ς
πλινθεύσουσι γάρ;

Ἄιακος

καὶ διαμέτρους καὶ σφῆνας. ὁ γὰρ Εὐριπίδης
κατ᾽ ἔπος βασανιεῖν φησι τὰς τραγῳδίας.

Ξανθίας

ἦ που βαρέως οἶμαι τὸν Αἰσχύλον φέρειν.

Ἄιακος

ἔβλεψε γοῦν ταυρηδὸν ἐγκύψας κάτω.

Ξανθίας

κρινεῖ δὲ δὴ τίς ταῦτα;

Ἄιακος
τοῦτ᾽ ἦν δύσκολον:
σοφῶν γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ἀπορίαν ηὑρισκέτην.
οὔτε γὰρ Ἀθηναίοισι συνέβαιν᾽ Αἰσχύλος — **Ξανθία**ς

πολλοὺς ἴσως ἐνόμιζε τοὺς τοιχωρύχους.

Ἄιακος

λῆρόν τε τἄλλ᾽ ἡγεῖτο τοῦ γνῶναι πέρι
φύσεις ποιητῶν: εἶτα τῷ σῷ δεσπότῃ
ἐπέτρεψαν, ὁτιὴ τῆς τέχνης ἔμπειρος ἦν.
ἀλλ᾽ εἰσίωμεν: ὡς ὅταν γ᾽ οἱ δεσπόται
ἐσπουδάκωσι, κλαύμαθ᾽ ἡμῖν γίγνεται.

Χορός

ἦ που δεινὸν ἐριβρεμέτας χόλον ἔνδοθεν ἕξει,
ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν ὀξύλαλον παρίδῃ θήγοντος ὀδόντα
ἀντιτέχνου: τότε δὴ μανίας ὑπὸ δεινῆς
ὄμματα στροβήσεται. **Χορός**

ἔσται δ᾽ ἱπολόφων τε λόγων κορυθαίολα νείκη
σχινδαλάμων τε παραξόνια σμιλεύματά τ᾽ ἔργων,
φωτὸς ἀμυνομένου φρενοτέκτονος ἀνδρὸς
ῥήμαθ᾽ ἱπποβάμονα. **Χορός**

φρίξας δ᾽ αὐτοκόμου λοφιᾶς λασιαύχενα χαίταν,
δεινὸν ἐπισκύνιον ξυνάγων βρυχώμενος ἥσει
ῥήματα γομφοπαγῆ πινακηδὸν ἀποσπῶν
γηγενεῖ φυσήματι: **Χορός**

ἔνθεν δὴ στοματουργὸς ἐπῶν βασανίστρια λίσφη
γλῶσσ᾽ ἀνελισσομένη φθονεροὺς κινοῦσα χαλινοὺς
ῥήματα δαιομένη καταλεπτολογήσει
πλευμόνων πολὺν πόνον. **Εὐριπίδης**

οὐκ ἂν μεθείμην τοῦ θρόνου, μὴ νουθέτει.
κρείττων γὰρ εἶναί φημι τούτου τὴν τέχνην.

Διόνυσος

Αἰσχύλε τί σιγᾷς; αἰσθάνει γὰρ τοῦ λόγου.

Εὐριπίδης

ἀποσεμνυνεῖται πρῶτον, ἅπερ ἑκάστοτε
ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαισιν ἐτερατεύετο.

Διόνυσος

ὦ δαιμόνι᾽ ἀνδρῶν μὴ μεγάλα λίαν λέγε.

Εὐριπίδης

ἐγῷδα τοῦτον καὶ διέσκεμμαι πάλαι,
ἄνθρωπον ἀγριοποιὸν αὐθαδόστομον,
ἔχοντ᾽ ἀχάλινον ἀκρατὲς ἀπύλωτον στόμα,
ἀπεριλάλητον κομποφακελορρήμονα.

Αἰσχύλος

ἄληθες ὦ παῖ τῆς ἀρουραίας θεοῦ;
σὺ δή με ταῦτ᾽ ὦ στωμυλιοσυλλεκτάδη
καὶ πτωχοποιὲ καὶ ῥακιοσυρραπτάδη;
ἀλλ᾽ οὔ τι χαίρων αὖτ᾽ ἐρεῖς.

Διόνυσος
παῦ᾽ Αἰσχύλε,
καὶ μὴ πρὸς ὀργὴν σπλάγχνα θερμήνῃς κότῳ.

Αἰσχύλος

οὐ δῆτα πρίν γ᾽ ἂν τοῦτον ἀποφήνω σαφῶς
τὸν χωλοποιὸν οἷος ὢν θρασύνεται.

Διόνυσος

ἄρν᾽ ἄρνα μέλανα παῖδες ἐξενέγκατε:
τυφὼς γὰρ ἐκβαίνειν παρασκευάζεται.

Αἰσχύλος

ὦ Κρητικὰς μὲν συλλέγων μονῳδίας,
γάμους δ᾽ ἀνοσίους ἐσφέρων ἐς τὴν τέχνην.

Διόνυσος

ἐπίσχες οὗτος ὦ πολυτίμητ᾽ Αἰσχύλε.
ἀπὸ τῶν χαλαζῶν δ᾽ ὦ πόνηρ᾽ Εὐριπίδη
ἄναγε σεαυτὸν ἐκποδών, εἰ σωφρονεῖς,
ἵνα μὴ κεφαλαίῳ τὸν κρόταφόν σου ῥήματι
θενὼν ὑπ᾽ ὀργῆς ἐκχέῃ τὸν Τήλεφον:
σὺ δὲ μὴ πρὸς ὀργὴν Αἰσχύλ᾽ ἀλλὰ πραόνως
ἔλεγχ᾽ ἐλέγχου: λοιδορεῖσθαι δ᾽ οὐ πρέπει

ἄνδρας ποιητὰς ὥσπερ ἀρτοπώλιδας.
σὺ δ᾽ εὐθὺς ὥσπερ πρῖνος ἐμπρησθεὶς βοᾷς.

Εὐριπίδης

ἕτοιμός εἰμ᾽ ἔγωγε, κοὐκ ἀναδύομαι,
δάκνειν δάκνεσθαι πρότερος, εἰ τούτῳ δοκεῖ,
τἄπη, τὰ μέλη, τὰ νεῦρα τῆς τραγῳδίας,
καὶ νὴ Δία τὸν Πηλέα γε καὶ τὸν Αἴολον
καὶ τὸν Μελέαγρον κἄτι μάλα τὸν Τήλεφον.

Διόνυσος

τί δαὶ σὺ βουλεύει ποιεῖν; λέγ᾽ Αἰσχύλε.

Αἰσχύλος

ἐβουλόμην μὲν οὐκ ἐρίζειν ἐνθάδε:
οὐκ ἐξ ἴσου γάρ ἐστιν ἀγὼν νῷν.

Διόνυσος
τί δαί;

Αἰσχύλος

ὅτι ἡ ποίησις οὐχὶ συντέθνηκέ μοι,
τούτῳ δὲ συντέθνηκεν, ὥσθ᾽ ἕξει λέγειν.
ὅμως δ᾽ ἐπειδή σοι δοκεῖ, δρᾶν ταῦτα χρή.

Διόνυσος

ἴθι νυν λιβανωτὸν δεῦρό τις καὶ πῦρ δότω.
ὅπως ἂν εὔξωμαι πρὸ τῶν σοφισμάτων
ἀγῶνα κρῖναι τόνδε μουσικώτατα:
ὑμεῖς δὲ ταῖς Μούσαις τι μέλος ὑπάσατε.

Χορός

ὦ Διὸς ἐννέα παρθένοι ἀγναὶ
Μοῦσαι, λεπτολόγους ξυνετὰς φρένας αἳ καθορᾶτε

ἀνδρῶν γνωμοτύπων, ὅταν εἰς ἔριν ὀξυμερίμνοις
ἔλθωσι στρεβλοῖσι παλαίσμασιν ἀντιλογοῦντες,
ἔλθετ᾽ ἐποψόμεναι δύναμιν
880 δεινοτάτοιν στομάτοιν πορίσασθαι
ῥήματα καὶ παραπρίσματ᾽ ἐπῶν.
νῦν γὰρ ἀγὼν σοφίας ὁ μέγας χωρεῖ πρὸς ἔργον ἤδη.

Διόνυσος

885 εὔχεσθε δὴ καὶ σφώ τι πρὶν τἄπη λέγειν.

Αἰσχύλος

Δήμητερ ἡ θρέψασα τὴν ἐμὴν φρένα,
εἶναί με τῶν σῶν ἄξιον μυστηρίων.

Διόνυσος

ἐπίθες λαβὼν δὴ καὶ σὺ λιβανωτόν.

Εὐριπίδης
καλῶς:
ἕτεροι γάρ εἰσιν οἷσιν εὔχομαι θεοῖς.

Διόνυσος

890 ἴδιοί τινές σοι, κόμμα καινόν;

Εὐριπίδης
καὶ μάλα.

Διόνυσος

ἴθι δὴ προσεύχου τοῖσιν ἰδιώταις θεοῖς.

Εὐριπίδης

αἰθὴρ ἐμὸν βόσκημα καὶ γλώσσης στρόφιγξ
καὶ ξύνεσι καὶ μυκτῆρες ὀσφραντήριοι,
ὀρθῶς μ᾽ ἐλέγχειν ὧν ἂν ἅπτωμαι λόγων.

Χορός

καὶ μὴν ἡμεῖς ἐπιθυμοῦμεν
παρὰ σοφοῖν ἀνδροῖν ἀκοῦσαι
τίνα λόγων ἐμμέλειαν
ἔπιτε δαΐαν ὁδόν.
γλῶσσα μὲν γὰρ ἠγρίωται,
λῆμα δ᾽ οὐκ ἄτολμον ἀμφοῖν,
οὐδ᾽ ἀκίνητοι φρένες.
προσδοκᾶν οὖν εἰκός ἐστι
τὸν μὲν ἀστεῖόν τι λέξειν
καὶ κατερρινημένον,
τὸν δ᾽ ἀνασπῶντ᾽ αὐτοπρέμνοις
τοῖς λόγοισιν
ἐμπεσόντα συσκεδᾶν πολλὰς
ἀλινδήθρας ἐπῶν. **Διόνυσος**

ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα χρὴ λέγειν: οὕτω δ᾽ ὅπως ἐρεῖτον
ἀστεῖα καὶ μήτ᾽ εἰκόνας μήθ᾽ οἷ᾽ ἂν ἄλλος εἴποι. **Εὐριπίδης**

καὶ μὴν ἐμαυτὸν μέν γε τὴν ποίησιν οἷός εἰμι,
ἐν τοῖσιν ὑστάτοις φράσω, τοῦτον δὲ πρῶτ᾽ ἐλέγξω,
ὡς ἦν ἀλαζὼν καὶ φέναξ οἵοις τε τοὺς θεατὰς
ἐξηπάτα μώρους λαβὼν παρὰ Φρυνίχῳ τραφέντας.
πρώτιστα μὲν γὰρ ἕνα τιν᾽ ἂν καθῖσεν ἐγκαλύψας,
Ἀχιλλέα τιν᾽ ἢ Νιόβην, τὸ πρόσωπον οὐχὶ δεικνύς,
πρόσχημα τῆς τραγῳδίας, γρύζοντας οὐδὲ τουτί.

Διόνυσος

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ δῆθ᾽.

Εὐριπίδης
ὁ δὲ χορός γ᾽ ἤρειδεν ὁρμαθοὺς ἂν
μελῶν ἐφεξῆς τέτταρας ξυνεχῶς ἄν οἱ δ᾽ ἐσίγων.

Διόνυσος

ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἔχαιρον τῇ σιωπῇ, καί με τοῦτ᾽ ἔτερπεν

οὐχ ἧττον ἢ νῦν οἱ λαλοῦντες.

Εὐριπίδης
ἠλίθιος γὰρ ἦσθα,
σάφ᾽ ἴσθι.

Διόνυσος
κἀμαυτῷ δοκῶ. τί δὲ ταῦτ᾽ ἔδρασ᾽ ὁ δεῖνα;

Εὐριπίδης

ὑπ᾽ ἀλαζονείας, ἵν᾽ ὁ θεατὴς προσδοκῶν καθοῖτο,
ὁπόθ᾽ ἡ Νιόβη τι φθέγξεται: τὸ δρᾶμα δ᾽ ἂν διήει.

Διόνυσος

ὦ παμπόνηρος, οἷ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐφενακιζόμην ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ.
τί σκορδινᾷ καὶ δυσφορεῖς;

Εὐριπίδης
ὅτι αὐτὸν ἐξελέγχω.
κἄπειτ᾽ ἐπειδὴ ταῦτα ληρήσειε καὶ τὸ δρᾶμα
ἤδη μεσοίη, ῥήματ᾽ ἂν βόεια δώδεκ᾽ εἶπεν,
ὀφρῦς ἔχοντα καὶ λόφους, δείν᾽ ἄττα μορμορωπά,
ἄγνωτα τοῖς θεωμένοις.

Αἰσχύλος
οἴμοι τάλας.

Διόνυσος
σιώπα.

Εὐριπίδης

σαφὲς δ᾽ ἂν εἶπεν οὐδὲ ἕν —

Διόνυσος
μὴ πρῖε τοὺς ὀδόντας.

Εὐριπίδης

ἀλλ᾽ ἢ Σκαμάνδρους ἢ τάφρους ἢ ‘π᾽ ἀσπίδων ἐπόντας
γρυπαιέτους χαλκηλάτους καὶ ῥήμαθ᾽ ἱππόκρημνα,
ἃ ξυμβαλεῖν οὐ ῥᾴδι᾽ ἦν.

Διόνυσος
νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐγὼ γοῦν
ἤδη ποτ᾽ ἐν μακρῷ χρόνῳ νυκτὸς διηγρύπνησα
τὸν ξουθὸν ἱππαλεκτρυόνα ζητῶν τίς ἐστιν ὄρνις.

Αἰσχύλος

σημεῖον ἐν ταῖς ναυσὶν ὦμαθέστατ᾽ ἐνεγέγραπτο.

Διόνυσος

ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν Φιλοξένου γ᾽ ᾤμην Ἔρυξιν εἶναι.

Εὐριπίδης

εἶτ᾽ ἐν τραγῳδίαις ἐχρῆν κἀλεκτρυόνα ποιῆσαι;

Αἰσχύλος

σὺ δ᾽ ὦ θεοῖσιν ἐχθρὲ ποῖ᾽ ἄττ᾽ ἐστὶν ἄττ᾽ ἐποίεις;

Εὐριπίδης

οὐχ ἱππαλεκτρυόνας μὰ Δί᾽ οὐδὲ τραγελάφους, ἅπερ σύ,
ἂν τοῖσι παραπετάσμασιν τοῖς Μηδικοῖς γράφουσιν:
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς παρέλαβον τὴν τέχνην παρὰ σοῦ τὸ πρῶτον εὐθὺς
οἰδοῦσαν ὑπὸ κομπασμάτων καὶ ῥημάτων ἐπαχθῶν,
ἴσχνανα μὲν πρώτιστον αὐτὴν καὶ τὸ βάρος ἀφεῖλον
ἐπυλλίοις καὶ περιπάτοις καὶ τευτλίοισι λευκοῖς,
χυλὸν διδοὺς στωμυλμάτων ἀπὸ βιβλίων ἀπηθῶν:
εἶτ᾽ ἀνέτρεφον μονῳδίαις — **Διόνυσος**
Κηφισοφῶντα μιγνύς.

Εὐριπίδης

εἶτ᾽ οὐκ ἐλήρουν ὅ τι τύχοιμ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἐμπεσὼν ἔφυρον,

ἀλλ᾽ οὐξιὼν πρώτιστα μέν μοι τὸ γένος εἶπ᾽ ἂν εὐθὺς
τοῦ δράματος.

Διόνυσος
κρεῖττον γὰρ ἦν σοι νὴ Δί᾽ ἢ τὸ σαυτοῦ.

Εὐριπίδης

ἔπειτ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἐπῶν οὐδὲν παρῆκ᾽ ἂν ἀργόν,
ἀλλ᾽ ἔλεγεν ἡ γυνή τέ μοι χὠ δοῦλος οὐδὲν ἧττον,
χὠ δεσπότης χἠ παρθένος χἠ γραῦς ἄν.

Αἰσχύλος
εἶτα δῆτα
οὐκ ἀποθανεῖν σε ταῦτ᾽ ἐχρῆν τολμῶντα; **Εὐριπίδης**
μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω:
δημοκρατικὸν γὰρ αὖτ᾽ ἔδρων.

Διόνυσος
τοῦτο μὲν ἔασον ὦ τᾶν.
οὐ σοὶ γάρ ἐστι περίπατος κάλλιστα περί γε τούτου.

Εὐριπίδης

ἔπειτα τουτουσὶ λαλεῖν ἐδίδαξα —

Αἰσχύλος
φημὶ κἀγώ.
ὡς πρὶν διδάξαι γ᾽ ὤφελες μέσος διαρραγῆναι.

Εὐριπίδης

λεπτῶν τε κανόνων ἐσβολὰς ἐπῶν τε γωνιασμούς,
νοεῖν ὁρᾶν ξυνιέναι στρέφειν ἐρᾶν τεχνάζειν,
κάχ᾽ ὑποτοπεῖσθαι, περινοεῖν ἅπαντα — **Αἰσχύλος**
φημὶ κἀγώ.

Εὐριπίδης

οἰκεῖα πράγματ᾽ εἰσάγων, οἷς χρώμεθ᾽, οἷς ξύνεσμεν,

ἐξ ὧν γ᾽ ἂν ἐξηλεγχόμην: ξυνειδότες γὰρ οὗτοι
ἤλεγχον ἄν μου τὴν τέχνην: ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐκομπολάκουν
ἀπὸ τοῦ φρονεῖν ἀποσπάσας, οὐδ᾽ ἐξέπληττον αὐτούς,
Κύκνους ποιῶν καὶ Μέμνονας κωδωνοφαλαροπώλους.
γνώσει δὲ τοὺς τούτου τε κἀμοὺς ἑκατέρου μαθητάς.
τουτουμενὶ Φορμίσιος Μεγαίνετός θ᾽ ὁ Μανῆς,
σαλπιγγολογχυπηνάδαι, σαρκασμοπιτυοκάμπται,
οὑμοὶ δὲ Κλειτοφῶν τε καὶ Θηραμένης ὁ κομψός.

Διόνυσος

Θηραμένης; σοφός γ᾽ ἀνὴρ καὶ δεινὸς ἐς τὰ πάντα,
ὃς ἢν κακοῖς που περιπέσῃ καὶ πλησίον παραστῇ,
πέπτωκεν ἔξω τῶν κακῶν, οὐ Χῖος ἀλλὰ Κεῖος.

Εὐριπίδης

τοιαῦτα μέντοὐγὼ φρονεῖν
τούτοισιν εἰσηγησάμην,
λογισμὸν ἐνθεὶς τῇ τέχνῃ
καὶ σκέψιν, ὥστ᾽ ἤδη νοεὶν
ἅπαντα καὶ διειδέναι
τά τ᾽ ἄλλα καὶ τὰς οἰκίας
οἰκεῖν ἄμεινον ἢ πρὸ τοῦ
κἀνασκοπεῖν, ‘πῶς τοῦτ᾽ ἔχει;
ποῦ μοι τοδί; τίς τοῦτ᾽ ἔλαβε;’

Διόνυσος

νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς νῦν γοῦν Ἀθηναίων
ἅπας τις εἰσιὼν
κέκραγε πρὸς τοὺς οἰκέτας
ζητεῖ τε, ‘ποῦ ‘στιν ἡ χύτρα;
τίς τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀπεδήδοκεν
τῆς μαινίδος; τὸ τρύβλιον
τὸ περυσινὸν τέθνηκέ μοι:
ποῦ τὸ σκόροδον τὸ χθιζινόν;
τίς τῆς ἐλάας παρέτραγεν;’
τέως δ᾽ ἀβελτερώτατοι

κεχηνότες Μαμμάκυθοι
Μελιτίδαι καθῆντο.

Χορός

τάδε μὲν λεύσσεις φαίδιμ᾽ Ἀχιλλεῦ:
σὺ δὲ τί φέρε πρὸς ταῦτα λέξεις;
μόνον ὅπως ...
μή σ᾽ ὁ θυμὸς ἁρπάσας
ἐκτὸς οἴσει τῶν ἐλαῶν:
δεινὰ γὰρ κατηγόρηκεν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅπως ὦ γεννάδα
μὴ πρὸς ὀργὴν ἀντιλέξεις,
ἀλλὰ συστείλας ἄκροισι
χρώμενος τοῖς ἱστίοις,
εἶτα μᾶλλον μᾶλλον ἄξεις
καὶ φυλάξεις,
ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν τὸ πνεῦμα λεῖον
καὶ καθεστηκὸς λάβῃς. **Διόνυσος**

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ πρῶτος τῶν Ἑλλήνων πυργώσας ῥήματα σεμνὰ
καὶ κοσμήσας τραγικὸν λῆρον, θαρρῶν τὸν κρουνὸν ἀφίει. **Αἰσχύλος**

θυμοῦμαι μὲν τῇ ξυντυχίᾳ, καὶ μου τὰ σπλάγχν᾽ ἀγανακτεῖ,
εἰ πρὸς τοῦτον δεῖ μ᾽ ἀντιλέγειν: ἵνα μὴ φάσκῃ δ᾽ ἀπορεῖν με,
ἀπόκριναί μοι, τίνος οὕνεκα χρὴ θαυμάζειν ἄνδρα ποιητήν; **Εὐριπίδης**

δεξιότητος καὶ νουθεσίας, ὅτι βελτίους τε ποιοῦμεν
τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν.

Αἰσχύλος
τοῦτ᾽ οὖν εἰ μὴ πεποίηκας,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ χρηστῶν καὶ γενναίων μοχθηροτάτους ἀπέδειξας,
τί παθεῖν φήσεις ἄξιος εἶναι; **Διόνυσος**
τεθνάναι: μὴ τοῦτον ἐρώτα.

Αἰσχύλος

σκέψαι τοίνυν οἵους αὐτοὺς παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ παρεδέξατο πρῶτον,

εἰ γενναίους καὶ τετραπήχεις, καὶ μὴ διαδρασιπολίτας,
μηδ᾽ ἀγοραίους μηδὲ κοβάλους ὥσπερ νῦν μηδὲ πανούργους,
ἀλλὰ πνέοντας δόρυ καὶ λόγχας καὶ λευκολόφους τρυφαλείας
καὶ πήληκας καὶ κνημῖδας καὶ θυμοὺς ἐπταβοείους.

Διόνυσος

καὶ δὴ χωρεῖ τουτὶ τὸ κακόν: κρανοποιῶν αὖ μ᾽ ἐπιτρίψει.

Εὐριπίδης

καὶ τί σὺ δράσας οὕτως αὐτοὺς γενναίους ἐξεδίδαξας;

Διόνυσος

Αἰσχύλε λέξον, μηδ᾽ αὐθάδως σεμνυνόμενος χαλέπαινε.

Αἰσχύλος

δρᾶμα ποιήσας Ἄρεως μεστόν.

Διόνυσος
ποῖον;

Αἰσχύλος
τοὺς ἑπτ᾽ ἐπὶ Θήβας:
ὃ θεασάμενος πᾶς ἄν τις ἀνὴρ ἠράσθη δάιος εἶναι.

Διόνυσος

τουτὶ μέν σοι κακὸν εἴργασται: Θηβαίους γὰρ πεποίηκας
ἀνδρειοτέρους ἐς τὸν πόλεμον, καὶ τούτου γ᾽ οὕνεκα τύπτου.

Αἰσχύλος

ἀλλ᾽ ὑμῖν αὖτ᾽ ἐξῆν ἀσκεῖν, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἐτράπεσθε.
εἶτα διδάξας Πέρσας μετὰ τοῦτ᾽ ἐπιθυμεῖν ἐξεδίδαξα
νικᾶν ἀεὶ τοὺς ἀντιπάλους, κοσμήσας ἔργον ἄριστον.

Διόνυσος

ἐχάρην γοῦν, †ἡνίκ᾽ ἤκουσα περὶ Δαρείου τεθνεῶτος,†
ὁ χορὸς δ᾽ εὐθὺς τὼ χεῖρ᾽ ὠδὶ συγκρούσας εἶπεν ‘ἰαυοῖ.’

Αἰσχύλος

ταῦτα γὰρ ἄνδρας χρὴ ποιητὰς ἀσκεῖν. σκέψαι γὰρ ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς
ὡς ὠφέλιμοι τῶν ποιητῶν οἱ γενναῖοι γεγένηνται.
Ὀρφεὺς μὲν γὰρ τελετάς θ᾽ ἡμῖν κατέδειξε φόνων τ᾽ ἀπέχεσθαι,
Μουσαῖος δ᾽ ἐξακέσεις τε νόσων καὶ χρησμούς, Ἡσίοδος δὲ
γῆς ἐργασίας, καρπῶν ὥρας, ἀρότους: ὁ δὲ θεῖος Ὅμηρος
ἀπὸ τοῦ τιμὴν καὶ κλέος ἔσχεν πλὴν τοῦδ᾽ ὅτι χρήστ᾽ ἐδίδαξεν,
τάξεις ἀρετὰς ὁπλίσεις ἀνδρῶν; **Διόνυσος**
καὶ μὴν οὐ Παντακλέα γε
ἐδίδαξεν ὅμως τὸν σκαιότατον: πρώην γοῦν, ἡνίκ᾽ ἔπεμπεν,
τὸ κράνος πρῶτον περιδησάμενος τὸν λόφον ἤμελλ᾽ ἐπιδήσειν.

Αἰσχύλος

ἀλλ᾽ ἄλλους τοι πολλοὺς ἀγαθούς, ὧν ἦν καὶ Λάμαχος ἥρως:
ὅθεν ἡμὴ φρὴν ἀπομαξαμένη πολλὰς ἀρετὰς ἐποίησεν,
Πατρόκλων, Τεύκρων θυμολεόντων, ἵν᾽ ἐπαίροιμ᾽ ἄνδρα πολίτην
ἀντεκτείνειν αὐτὸν τούτοις, ὁπόταν σάλπιγγος ἀκούσῃ.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ Φαίδρας ἐποίουν πόρνας οὐδὲ Σθενεβοίας,
οὐδ᾽ οἶδ᾽ οὐδεὶς ἥντιν᾽ ἐρῶσαν πώποτ᾽ ἐποίησα γυναῖκα.

Εὐριπίδης

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ γὰρ ἐπῆν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης οὐδέν σοι.

Αἰσχύλος
μηδέ γ᾽ ἐπείη.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐπί τοι σοὶ καὶ τοῖς σοῖσιν πολλὴ πολλοῦ ‘πικαθῆτο,
ὥστε γε καὐτόν σε κατ᾽ οὖν ἔβαλεν.

Διόνυσος
νὴ τὸν Δία τοῦτό γέ τοι δή.
ἃ γὰρ ἐς τὰς ἀλλοτρίας ἐποίεις, αὐτὸς τούτοισιν ἐπλήγης.

Εὐριπίδης

καὶ τί βλάπτουσ᾽ ὦ σχέτλι᾽ ἀνδρῶν τὴν πόλιν ἁμαὶ Σθενέβοιαι;

Αἰσχύλος

ὅτι γενναίας καὶ γενναίων ἀνδρῶν ἀλόχους ἀνέπεισας
κώνεια πιεῖν αἰσχυνθείσας διὰ τοὺς σοὺς Βελλεροφόντας.

Εὐριπίδης

πότερον δ᾽ οὐκ ὄντα λόγον τοῦτον περὶ τῆς Φαίδρας ξυνέθηκα;

Αἰσχύλος

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ὄντ᾽: ἀλλ᾽ ἀποκρύπτειν χρὴ τὸ πονηρὸν τόν γε ποιητήν,
καὶ μὴ παράγειν μηδὲ διδάσκειν. τοῖς μὲν γὰρ παιδαρίοισιν
ἔστι διδάσκαλος ὅστις φράζει, τοῖσιν δ᾽ ἡβῶσι ποιηταί.
πάνυ δὴ δεῖ χρηστὰ λέγειν ἡμᾶς.

Εὐριπίδης
ἦν οὖν σὺ λέγῃς Λυκαβηττοὺς
καὶ Παρνασσῶν ἡμῖν μεγέθη, τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ τὸ χρηστὰ διδάσκειν,
ὃν χρῆν φράζειν ἀνθρωπείως; **Αἰσχύλος**
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ κακόδαιμον ἀνάγκη
μεγάλων γνωμῶν καὶ διανοιῶν ἴσα καὶ τὰ ῥήματα τίκτειν.
κἄλλως εἰκὸς τοὺς ἡμιθέους τοῖς ῥήμασι μείζοσι χρῆσθαι:
καὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἱματίοις ἡμῶν χρῶνται πολὺ σεμνοτέροισιν.
ἀμοῦ χρηστῶς καταδείξαντος διελυμήνω σύ.

Εὐριπίδης
τί δράσας; **Αἰσχύλος**

πρῶτον μὲν τοὺς βασιλεύοντας ῥάκι᾽ ἀμπισχών, ἵν᾽ ἐλεινοὶ
τοῖς ἀνθρώποις φαίνοιντ᾽ εἶναι.

Εὐριπίδης
τοῦτ᾽ οὖν ἔβλαψά τι δράσας; **Αἰσχύλος**

οὔκουν ἐθέλει γε τριηραρχεῖν πλουτῶν οὐδεὶς διὰ ταῦτα,
ἀλλὰ ῥακίοις περιειλάμενος κλάει καὶ φησὶ πένεσθαι.

Διόνυσος

νὴ τὴν Δήμητρα χιτῶνά γ᾽ ἔχων οὔλων ἐρίων ὑπένερθεν.
κἂν ταῦτα λέγων ἐξαπατήσῃ, παρὰ τοὺς ἰχθῦς ἀνέκυψεν.

Αἰσχύλος

εἶτ᾽ αὖ λαλιὰν ἐπιτηδεῦσαι καὶ στωμυλίαν ἐδίδαξας,
ἢ ‘ξεκένωσεν τάς τε παλαίστρας καὶ τὰς πυγὰς ἐνέτριψεν
τῶν μειρακίων στωμυλλομένων, καὶ τοὺς Παράλους ἀνέπεισεν
ἀνταγορεύειν τοῖς ἄρχουσιν. καίτοι τότε γ᾽ ἡνίκ᾽ ἐγὼ ‘ζων,
οὐκ ἠπίσταντ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἢ μᾶζαν καλέσαι καὶ ‘ῥυππαπαῖ᾽ εἰπεῖν.

Διόνυσος

νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω, καὶ προσπαρδεῖν γ᾽ ἐς τὸ στόμα τῷ θαλάμακι,
καὶ μινθῶσαι τὸν ξύσσιτον κἀκβάς τινα λωποδυτῆσαι:
νῦν δ᾽ ἀντιλέγει κοὐκέτ᾽ ἐλαύνων πλεῖ δευρὶ καὖθις ἐκεῖσε.

Αἰσχύλος

ποίων δὲ κακῶν οὐκ αἴτιός ἐστ᾽;
οὐ προαγωγοὺς κατέδειξ᾽ οὗτος,
καὶ τικτούσας ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς,
καὶ μιγνυμένας τοῖσιν ἀδελφοῖς,
καὶ φασκούσας οὐ ζῆν τὸ ζῆν;
κᾆτ᾽ ἐκ τούτων ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν
ὑπογραμματέων ἀνεμεστώθη
καὶ βωμολόχων δημοπιθήκων
ἐξαπατώντων τὸν δῆμον ἀεί,
λαμπάδα δ᾽ οὐδεὶς οἷός τε φέρειν
ὑπ᾽ ἀγυμνασίας ἔτι νυνί.

Διόνυσος

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ δῆθ᾽, ὥστ᾽ ἐπαφαυάνθην
Παναθηναίοισι γελῶν, ὅτε δὴ
βραδὺς ἄνθρωπός τις ἔθει κύψας
λευκὸς πίων ὑπολειπόμενος
καὶ δεινὰ ποιῶν: κᾆθ᾽ οἱ Κεραμῆς

ἐν ταῖσι πύλαις παίουσ᾽ αὐτοῦ
γαστέρα πλευρὰς λαγόνας πυγήν,
ὁ δὲ τυπτόμενος ταῖσι πλατείαις
ὑποπερδόμενος
φυσῶν τὴν λαμπάδ᾽ ἔφευγεν.

Χορός

μέγα τὸ πρᾶγμα, πολὺ τὸ νεῖκος, ἁδρὸς ὁ πόλεμος ἔρχεται.
χαλεπὸν οὖν ἔργον διαιρεῖν,
ὅταν ὁ μὲν τείνῃ βιαίως,
ὁ δ᾽ ἐπαναστρέφειν δύνηται κἀπερείδεσθαι τορῶς.
ἀλλὰ μὴ ν᾽ ταὐτῷ κάθησθον:
ἐσβολαὶ γάρ εἰσι πολλαὶ χἄτεραι σοφισμάτων.
ὅ τι περ οὖν ἔχετον ἐρίζειν,
λέγετον ἔπιτον ἀνά τε δέρετον
τά τε παλαιὰ καὶ τὰ καινά,
κἀποκινδυνεύετον λεπτόν τι καὶ σοφὸν λέγειν. **Χορός**

εἰ δὲ τοῦτο καταφοβεῖσθον, μή τις ἀμαθία προσῇ
τοῖς θεωμένοισιν, ὡς τὰ
λεπτὰ μὴ γνῶναι λεγόντοιν,
μηδὲν ὀρρωδεῖτε τοῦθ᾽: ὡς οὐκέθ᾽ οὕτω ταῦτ᾽ ἔχει.
ἐστρατευμένοι γάρ εἰσι,
βιβλίον τ᾽ ἔχων ἕκαστος μανθάνει τὰ δεξιά:
αἱ φύσεις τ᾽ ἄλλως κράτισται,
νῦν δὲ καὶ παρηκόνηνται.
μηδὲν οὖν δείσητον, ἀλλὰ
πάντ᾽ ἐπέξιτον θεατῶν γ᾽ οὕνεχ᾽ ὡς ὄντων σοφῶν. **Εὐριπίδης**

καὶ μὴν ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς τοὺς προλόγους σου τρέψομαι,
ὅπως τὸ πρῶτον τῆς τραγῳδίας μέρος
πρώτιστον αὐτοῦ βασανιῶ τοῦ δεξιοῦ.
ἀσαφὴς γὰρ ἦν ἐν τῇ φράσει τῶν πραγμάτων.

Διόνυσος

καὶ ποῖον αὐτοῦ βασανιεῖς;

Εὐριπίδης
πολλοὺς πάνυ.
πρῶτον δέ μοι τὸν ἐξ Ὀρεστείας λέγε.

Διόνυσος

ἄγε δὴ σιώπα πᾶς ἀνήρ. λέγ᾽ Αἰσχύλε.

Αἰσχύλος

‘Ἑρμῆ χθόνιε πατρῷ᾽ ἐποπτεύων κράτη,
σωτὴρ γενοῦ μοι σύμμαχός τ᾽ αἰτουμένῳ.
ἥκω γὰρ ἐς γῆν τήνδε καὶ κατέρχομαι.᾽

Διόνυσος

τούτων ἔχεις ψέγειν τι;

Εὐριπίδης
πλεῖν ἢ δώδεκα.

Διόνυσος

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ πάντα ταῦτά γ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἢ τρία.

Εὐριπίδης

ἔχει δ᾽ ἕκαστον εἴκοσίν γ᾽ ἁμαρτίας.

Διόνυσος

Αἰσχύλε παραινῶ σοι σιωπᾶν: εἰ δὲ μή,
πρὸς τρισὶν ἰαμβείοισι προσοφείλων φανεῖ.

Αἰσχύλος

ἐγὼ σιωπῶ τῷδ᾽;

Διόνυσος
ἐὰν πείθῃ γ᾽ ἐμοί.

Εὐριπίδης

εὐθὺς γὰρ ἡμάρτηκεν οὐράνιόν γ᾽ ὅσον.

Αἰσχύλος

ὁρᾷς ὅτι ληρεῖς;

Διόνυσος
ἀλλ᾽ ὀλίγον γέ μοι μέλει.

Αἰσχύλος

πῶς φῄς μ᾽ ἁμαρτεῖν;

Εὐριπίδης
αὖθις ἐξ ἀρχῆς λέγε.

Αἰσχύλος

‘Ἑρμῆ χθόνιε πατρῷ᾽ ἐποπτεύων κράτη.’

Εὐριπίδης

οὔκουν Ὀρέστης τοῦτ᾽ ἐπὶ τῷ τύμβῳ λέγει
τῷ τοῦ πατρὸς τεθνεῶτος; **Αἰσχύλος**
οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω.

Εὐριπίδης

πότερ᾽ οὖν τὸν Ἑρμῆν, ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ἀπώλετο
αὐτοῦ βιαίως ἐκ γυναικείας χερὸς
δόλοις λαθραίοις, ταῦτ᾽ ‘ἐποπτεύειν’ ἔφη; **Αἰσχύλος**

οὐ δῆτ᾽ ἐκεῖνον, ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἐριούνιον
Ἑρμῆν χθόνιον προσεῖπε, κἀδήλου λέγων
ὁτιὴ πατρῷον τοῦτο κέκτηται γέρας — **Εὐριπίδης**

ἔτι μεῖζον ἐξήμαρτες ἢ ‘γὼ ‘βουλόμην:
εἰ γὰρ πατρῷον τὸ χθόνιον ἔχει γέρας —

Διόνυσος

οὕτω γ᾽ ἂν εἴη πρὸς πατρὸς τυμβωρύχος.

Αἰσχύλος

Διόνυσε πίνεις οἶνον οὐκ ἀνθοσμίαν.

Διόνυσος

λέγ᾽ ἕτερον αὐτῷ: σὺ δ᾽ ἐπιτήρει τὸ βλάβος.

Αἰσχύλος

‘σωτὴρ γενοῦ μοι σύμμαχός τ᾽ αἰτουμένῳ.
ἥκω γὰρ ἐς γῆν τήνδε καὶ κατέρχομαι— ‘

Εὐριπίδης

δὶς ταὐτὸν ἡμῖν εἶπεν ὁ σοφὸς Αἰσχύλος.

Διόνυσος

πῶς δίς;

Εὐριπίδης
σκόπει τὸ ῥῆμ᾽: ἐγὼ δέ σοι φράσω.
‘ἥκω γὰρ ἐς γῆν,’ φησί, ‘καὶ κατέρχομαι:’
‘ἥκω’ δὲ ταὐτόν ἐστι τῷ ‘κατέρχομαι.’

Διόνυσος

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ὥσπερ γ᾽ εἴ τις εἴποι γείτονι,
‘χρῆσον σὺ μάκτραν, εἰ δὲ βούλει, κάρδοπον.’

Αἰσχύλος

οὐ δῆτα τοῦτό γ᾽ ὦ κατεστωμυλμένε
ἄνθρωπε ταὔτ᾽ ἔστ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἄριστ᾽ ἐπῶν ἔχον.

Εὐριπίδης

πῶς δή; δίδαξον γάρ με καθ᾽ ὅ τι δὴ λέγεις;

Αἰσχύλος

‘ἐλθεῖν’ μὲν ἐς γῆν ἔσθ᾽ ὅτῳ μετῇ πάτρας:
χωρὶς γὰρ ἄλλης συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν:
φεύγων δ᾽ ἀνὴρ ‘ἥκει’ τε καὶ ‘κατέρχεται.’

Διόνυσος

εὖ νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω. τί σὺ λέγεις Εὐριπίδη;

Εὐριπίδης

οὐ φημὶ τὸν Ὀρέστην κατελθεῖν οἴκαδε:
λάθρᾳ γὰρ ἦλθεν οὐ πιθὼν τοὺς κυρίους.

Διόνυσος

εὖ νὴ τὸν Ἑρμῆν: ὅ τι λέγεις δ᾽ οὐ μανθάνω.

Εὐριπίδης

πέραινε τοίνυν ἕτερον.

Διόνυσος
ἴθι πέραινε σὺ
Αἰσχύλ᾽ ἀνύσας: σὺ δ᾽ ἐς τὸ κακὸν ἀπόβλεπε.

Αἰσχύλος

‘τύμβου δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ὄχθῳ τῷδε κηρύσσω πατρὶ
κλύειν ἀκοῦσαι.’

Εὐριπίδης
τοῦθ᾽ ἕτερον αὖθις λέγει,
‘κλύειν ἀκοῦσαι,’ ταὐτὸν ὂν σαφέστατα.

Διόνυσος

τεθνηκόσιν γὰρ ἔλεγεν ὦ μόχθηρε σύ,
οἷς οὐδὲ τρὶς λέγοντες ἐξικνούμεθα.

Αἰσχύλος

σὺ δὲ πῶς ἐποίεις τοὺς προλόγους;

Εὐριπίδης
ἐγὼ φράσω.
κἄν που δὶς εἴπω ταὐτόν, ἢ στοιβὴν ἴδῃς
ἐνοῦσαν ἔξω τοῦ λόγου, κατάπτυσον.

Διόνυσος

ἴθι δὴ λέγ᾽: οὐ γάρ μοὔστιν ἀλλ᾽ ἀκουστέα
τῶν σῶν προλόγων τῆς ὀρθότητος τῶν ἐπῶν.

Εὐριπίδης

‘ἦν Οἰδίπους τὸ πρῶτον εὐδαίμων ἀνήρ’ —

Αἰσχύλος

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἀλλὰ κακοδαίμων φύσει,
ὅντινά γε πρὶν φῦναι μὲν Ἀπόλλων ἔφη
ἀποκτενεῖν τὸν πατέρα, πρὶν καὶ γεγονέναι:
πῶς οὖτος ἦν τὸ πρῶτον εὐδαίμων ἀνήρ; **Εὐριπίδης**

‘εἶτ᾽ ἐγένετ᾽ αὖθις ἀθλιώτατος βροτῶν.’

Αἰσχύλος

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ δῆτ᾽, οὐ μὲν οὖν ἐπαύσατο.
πῶς γάρ; ὅτε δὴ πρῶτον μὲν αὐτὸν γενόμενον
χειμῶνος ὄντος ἐξέθεσαν ἐν ὀστράκῳ,
ἵνα μὴ ‘κτραφεὶς γένοιτο τοῦ πατρὸς φονεύς:
εἶθ᾽ ὡς Πόλυβον ἤρρησεν οἰδῶν τὼ πόδε:
ἔπειτα γραῦν ἔγημεν αὐτὸς ὢν νέος

καὶ πρός γε τούτοις τὴν ἑαυτοῦ μητέρα:
εἶτ᾽ ἐξετύφλωσεν αὐτόν.

Διόνυσος
εὐδαίμων ἄρ᾽ ἦν,
εἰ κἀστρατήγησέν γε μετ᾽ Ἐρασινίδου.

Εὐριπίδης

ληρεῖς: ἐγὼ δὲ τοὺς προλόγους καλοὺς ποιῶ.

Αἰσχύλος

καὶ μὴν μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ κατ᾽ ἔπος γέ σου κνίσω
τὸ ῥῆμ᾽ ἕκαστον, ἀλλὰ σὺν τοῖσιν θεοῖς
ἀπὸ ληκυθίου σου τοὺς προλόγους διαφθερῶ.

Εὐριπίδης

ἀπὸ ληκυθίου σὺ τοὺς ἐμούς;

Αἰσχύλος
ἑνὸς μόνου.
ποιεῖς γὰρ οὕτως ὥστ᾽ ἐναρμόττειν ἅπαν,
καὶ κῳδάριον καὶ ληκύθιον καὶ θύλακον,
ἐν τοῖς ἰαμβείοισι. δείξω δ᾽ αὐτίκα.

Εὐριπίδης

ἰδού, σὺ δείξεις;

Αἰσχύλος
φημί.

Διόνυσος
καὶ δὴ χρὴ λέγειν.

Εὐριπίδης

Αἴγυπτος, ὡς ὁ πλεῖστος ἔσπαρται λόγος,

ξὺν παισὶ πεντήκοντα ναυτίλῳ πλάτῃ
Ἄργος κατασχών — **Αἰσχύλος**
ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.

Διόνυσος

τουτὶ τί ἦν τὸ ληκύθιον; οὐ κλαύσεται;
λέγ᾽ ἕτερον αὐτῷ πρόλογον, ἵνα καὶ γνῶ πάλιν.

Εὐριπίδης

‘Διόνυσος, ὃς θύρσοισι καὶ νεβρῶν δοραῖς
καθαπτὸς ἐν πεύκαισι Παρνασσὸν κάτα
πηδᾷ χορεύων᾽ — **Αἰσχύλος**
ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.

Διόνυσος

οἴμοι πεπλήγμεθ᾽ αὖθις ὑπὸ τῆς ληκύθου.

Εὐριπίδης

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἔσται πρᾶγμα: πρὸς γὰρ τουτονὶ
τὸν πρόλογον οὐχ ἕξει προσάψαι λήκυθον.
‘οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις πάντ᾽ ἀνὴρ εὐδαιμονεῖ:
ἢ γὰρ πεφυκὼς ἐσθλὸς οὐκ ἔχει βίον,
ἢ δυσγενὴς ὤν᾽ — **Αἰσχύλος**
ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.

Διόνυσος

Εὐριπίδη —

Εὐριπίδης
τί ἔσθ᾽; **Διόνυσος**
ὑφέσθαι μοι δοκεῖ:
τὸ ληκύθιον γὰρ τοῦτο πνευσεῖται πολύ.

Εὐριπίδης

οὐδ᾽ ἂν μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα φροντίσαιμί γε:
νυνὶ γὰρ αὐτοῦ τοῦτό γ᾽ ἐκκεκόψεται.

Διόνυσος

ἴθι δὴ λέγ᾽ ἕτερον κἀπέχου τῆς ληκύθου.

Εὐριπίδης

‘Σιδώνιόν ποτ᾽ ἄστυ Κάδμος ἐκλιπὼν
Ἀγήνορος παῖς᾽ —

Αἰσχύλος
ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.

Διόνυσος

ὦ δαιμόνι᾽ ἀνδρῶν ἀποπρίω τὴν λήκυθον,
ἵνα μὴ διακναίσῃ τοὺς προλόγους ἡμῶν.

Εὐριπίδης
τὸ τί;
ἐγὼ πρίωμαι τῷδ᾽; **Διόνυσος**
ἐὰν πείθῃ γ᾽ ἐμοί.

Εὐριπίδης

οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἐπεὶ πολλοὺς προλόγους ἔξω λέγειν
ἵν᾽ οὗτος οὐχ ἕξει προσάψαι ληκύθιον.
‘Πέλοψ ὁ Ταντάλειος ἐς Πῖσαν μολὼν
θοαῖσιν ἵπποις᾽ — **Αἰσχύλος**
ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.

Διόνυσος

ὁρᾷς, προσῆψεν αὖθις αὖ τὴν λήκυθον.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦγάθ᾽ ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἀπόδος πάσῃ τέχνῃ:
λήψει γὰρ ὀβολοῦ πάνυ καλήν τε κἀγαθήν.

Εὐριπίδης

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὔπω γ᾽: ἔτι γὰρ εἰσί μοι συχνοί.
‘Οἰνεύς ποτ᾽ ἐκ γῆς’ —

Αἰσχύλος
ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.

Εὐριπίδης

ἔασον εἰπεῖν πρῶθ᾽ ὅλον με τὸν στίχον.
‘Οἰνεύς ποτ᾽ ἐκ γῆς πολύμετρον λαβὼν στάχυν
θύων ἀπαρχάς’ — **Αἰσχύλος**
ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.

Διόνυσος

μεταξὺ θύων; καὶ τίς αὖθ᾽ ὑφείλετο;

Εὐριπίδης

ἔα αὐτὸν ὦ τᾶν: πρὸς τοδὶ γὰρ εἰπάτω.
‘Ζεύς, ὡς λέλεκται τῆς ἀληθείας ὕπο’ —

Διόνυσος

ἀπολεῖ σ᾽: ἐρεῖ γάρ, ‘ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.’
τὸ ληκύθιον γὰρ τοῦτ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῖς προλόγοισί σου
ὥσπερ τὰ σῦκ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἔφυ.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐς τὰ μέλη πρὸς τῶν θεῶν αὐτοῦ τραποῦ.

Εὐριπίδης

καὶ μὴν ἔχω γ᾽ οἷς αὐτὸν ἀποδείξω κακὸν
μελοποιὸν ὄντα καὶ ποιοῦντα ταὔτ᾽ ἀεί.

Χορός

τί ποτε πρᾶγμα γενήσεται;
φροντίζειν γὰρ ἔγωγ᾽ ἔχω,
τίν᾽ ἄρα μέμψιν ἐποίσει
ἀνδρὶ τῷ πολὺ πλεῖστα δὴ

καὶ κάλλιστα μέλη ποιήσαντι
τῶν μέχρι νυνί.
θαυμάζω γὰρ ἔγωγ᾽ ὅπῃ
μέμψεταί ποτε τοῦτον
τὸν Βακχεῖον ἄνακτα,
καὶ δέδοιχ᾽ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ.

Εὐριπίδης

πάνυ γε μέλη θαυμαστά: δείξει δὴ τάχα.
εἰς ἓν γὰρ αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ μέλη ξυντεμῶ.

Διόνυσος

καὶ μὴν λογιοῦμαι ταῦτα τῶν ψήφων λαβών: (διαύλιον προσαυλεῖ τις)

Εὐριπίδης

Φθιῶτ᾽ Ἀχιλλεῦ, τί ποτ᾽ ἀνδροδάικτον ἀκούων
ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ᾽ ἀρωγάν;
Ἑρμᾶν μὲν πρόγονον τίομεν γένος οἱ περὶ λίμναν.
ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ᾽ ἀρωγάν; **Διόνυσος**

δύο σοὶ κόπω Αἰσχύλε τούτω.

Εὐριπίδης

κύδιστ᾽ Ἀχαιῶν Ἀτρέως πολυκοίρανε μάνθανέ μου παῖ.
ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ᾽ ἀρωγάν; **Διόνυσος**

τρίτος ᾠσχύλε σοὶ κόπος οὗτος.

Εὐριπίδης

εὐφαμεῖτε: μελισσονόμοι δόμον Ἀρτέμιδος πέλας οἴγειν.
ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ᾽ ἀρωγάν;
κύριός εἰμι θροεῖν ὅδιον κράτος αἴσιον ἀνδρῶν.
ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ᾽ ἀρωγάν; **Διόνυσος**

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ τὸ χρῆμα τῶν κόπων ὅσον.

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἐς τὸ βαλανεῖον βούλομαι:
ὑπὸ τῶν κόπων γὰρ τὼ νεφρὼ βουβωνιῶ.

Εὐριπίδης

μὴ πρίν γ᾽ ἂν ἀκούσῃς χἀτέραν στάσιν μελῶν
ἐκ τῶν κιθαρῳδικῶν νόμων εἰργασμένην.

Διόνυσος

ἴθι δὴ πέραινε, καὶ κόπον μὴ προστίθει.

Εὐριπίδης

ὅπως Ἀχαιῶν δίθρονον κράτος, Ἑλλάδος ἥβας,
τοφλαττοθρατ τοφλαττοθρατ,
Σφίγγα δυσαμεριᾶν πρύτανιν κύνα, πέμπει,
τοφλαττοθρατ τοφλαττοθρατ,
σὺν δορὶ καὶ χερὶ πράκτορι θούριος ὄρνις,
τοφλαττοθρατ τοφλαττοθρατ,
κυρεῖν παρασχὼν ἰταμαῖς κυσὶν ἀεροφοίτοις,
τοφλαττοθρατ τοφλαττοθρατ,
τὸ συγκλινές τ᾽ ἐπ᾽ Αἴαντι,
τοφλαττοθρατ τοφλαττοθρατ.

Διόνυσος

τί τὸ ‘φλαττοθρατ’ τοῦτ᾽ ἐστίν; ἐκ Μαραθῶνος ἢ
πόθεν συνέλεξας ἰμονιοστρόφου μέλη;

Αἰσχύλος

ἀλλ᾽ οὖν ἐγὼ μὲν ἐς τὸ καλὸν ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦ
ἤνεγκον αὖθ᾽, ἵνα μὴ τὸν αὐτὸν Φρυνίχῳ
λειμῶνα Μουσῶν ἱερὸν ὀφθείην δρέπων:
οὗτος δ᾽ ἀπὸ πάντων †μὲν φέρει, πορνιδίων†,
σκολίων Μελήτου, Καρικῶν αὐλημάτων,
θρήνων, χορειῶν. τάχα δὲ δηλωθήσεται.
ἐνεγκάτω τις τὸ λύριον. καίτοι τί δεῖ
λύρας ἐπὶ τούτων; ποῦ ‘στιν ἡ τοῖς ὀστράκοις

αὕτη κροτοῦσα; δεῦρο Μοῦσ᾽ Εὐριπίδου,
πρὸς ἥνπερ ἐπιτήδεια ταῦτ᾽ ᾄδειν μέλη.

Διόνυσος

αὕτη ποθ᾽ ἡ Μοῦσ᾽ οὐκ ἐλεσβίαζεν, οὔ.

Αἰσχύλος

ἀλκυόνες, αἳ παρ᾽ ἀενάοις θαλάσσης
κύμασι στωμύλλετε,
τέγγουσαι νοτίοις πτερῶν
ῥανίσι χρόα δροσιζόμεναι:
αἵ θ᾽ ὑπωρόφιοι κατὰ γωνίας
εἰειειειλίσσετε δακτύλοις φάλαγγες
ἱστόπονα πηνίσματα,
κερκίδος ἀοιδοῦ μελέτας,
ἵν᾽ ὁ φίλαυλος ἔπαλλε δελφὶς
πρῴραις κυανεμβόλοις
μαντεῖα καὶ σταδίους,
οἰνάνθας γάνος ἀμπέλου,
βότρυος ἕλικα παυσίπονον.
περίβαλλ᾽ ὦ τέκνον ὠλένας.
ὁρᾷς τὸν πόδα τοῦτον; **Διόνυσος**
ὁρῶ.

Αἰσχύλος

τί δαί; τοῦτον ὁρᾷς;

Διόνυσος
ὁρῶ.

Αἰσχύλος

τοιαυτὶ μέντοι σὺ ποιῶν
τολμᾷς τἀμὰ μέλη ψέγειν,
ἀνὰ τὸ δωδεκαμήχανον
Κυρήνης μελοποιῶν;
τὰ μὲν μέλη σου ταῦτα: βούλομαι δ᾽ ἔτι

τὸν τῶν μονῳδιῶν διεξελθεῖν τρόπον.
ὦ νυκτὸς κελαινοφαὴς
ὄρφνα, τίνα μοι
δύστανον ὄνειρον
πέμπεις ἐξ ἀφανοῦς,
Ἀίδα πρόμολον,
ψυχὰν ἄψυχον ἔχοντα,
μελαίνας Νυκτὸς παῖδα,
φρικώδη δεινὰν ὄψιν,
μελανονεκυείμονα,
φόνια φόνια δερκόμενον,
μεγάλους ὄνυχας ἔχοντα.
ἀλλά μοι ἀμφίπολοι λύχνον ἅψατε
κάλπισί τ᾽ ἐκ ποταμῶν δρόσον ἄρατε, θέρμετε δ᾽ ὕδωρ,
ὡς ἂν θεῖον ὄνειρον ἀποκλύσω.
ἰὼ πόντιε δαῖμον,
τοῦτ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽: ἰὼ ξύνοικοι,
τάδε τέρα θεάσασθε.
τὸν ἀλεκτρυόνα μου συναρπάσασα
φρούδη Γλύκη.
Νύμφαι ὀρεσσίγονοι.
ὦ Μανία ξύλλαβε.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἃ τάλαινα προσέχουσ᾽ ἔτυχον
ἐμαυτῆς ἔργοισι,
λίνου μεστὸν ἄτρακτον
εἰειειειλίσσουσα χεροῖν
κλωστῆρα ποιοῦσ᾽, ὅπως
κνεφαῖος εἰς ἀγορὰν
φέρουσ᾽ ἀποδοίμαν:
ὁ δ᾽ ἀνέπτατ᾽ ἀνέπτατ᾽ ἐς αἰθέρα
κουφοτάταις πτερύγων ἀκμαῖς:
ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ἄχε᾽ ἄχεα κατέλιπε,
δάκρυα δάκρυά τ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ὀμμάτων
ἔβαλον ἔβαλον ἃ τλάμων.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ Κρῆτες, Ἴδας τέκνα,
τὰ τόξα λαβόντες ἐπαμύνατε,
τὰ κῶλά τ᾽ ἀμπάλλετε κυκλούμενοι τὴν οἰκίαν.
ἅμα δὲ Δίκτυννα παῖς Ἄρτεμις καλὰ
τὰς κυνίσκας ἔχουσ᾽ ἐλθέτω διὰ δόμων πανταχῇ,

σὺ δ᾽ ὦ Διὸς διπύρους ἀνέχουσα
λαμπάδας ὀξυτάτας χεροῖν Ἑκάτα παράφηνον
ἐς Γλύκης, ὅπως ἂν
εἰσελθοῦσα φωράσω.

Διόνυσος

παύσασθον ἤδη τῶν μελῶν.

Αἰσχύλος
κἄμοιγ᾽ ἅλις.
ἐπὶ τὸν σταθμὸν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀγαγεῖν βούλομαι,
ὅπερ ἐξελέγξει τὴν ποίησιν νῷν μόνον.
τὸ γὰρ βάρος νὼ βασανιεῖ τῶν ῥημάτων.

Διόνυσος

ἴτε δεῦρό νυν, εἴπερ γε δεῖ καὶ τοῦτό με
ἀνδρῶν ποιητῶν τυροπωλῆσαι τέχνην.

Χορός

ἐπίπονοί γ᾽ οἱ δεξιοί.
τόδε γὰρ ἕτερον αὖ τέρας
νεοχμόν, ἀτοπίας πλέων,
ὃ τίς ἂν ἐπενόησεν ἄλλος; *
μὰ τὸν ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδ᾽ ἂν εἴ τις
ἔλεγέ μοι τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων,
ἐπιθόμην, ἀλλ᾽ ᾠόμην ἂν
αὐτὸν αὐτὰ ληρεῖν. **Διόνυσος**

ἴθι δὴ παρίστασθον παρὰ τὼ πλάστιγγ᾽,

Αἰσχύλος καί Εὐριπίδης
ἰδού.

Διόνυσος

καὶ λαβομένω τὸ ῥῆμ᾽ ἑκάτερος εἴπατον,
καὶ μὴ μεθῆσθον, πρὶν ἂν ἐγὼ σφῷν κοκκύσω.

Αἰσχύλος καὶ Εὐριπίδης

ἐχόμεθα.

Διόνυσος
τοὔπος νῦν λέγετον ἐς τὸν σταθμόν.

Εὐριπίδης

‘εἴθ᾽ ὤφελ᾽ Ἀργοῦς μὴ διαπτάσθαι σκάφος.’

Αἰσχύλος

‘Σπερχειὲ ποταμὲ βουνόμοι τ᾽ ἐπιστροφαί.’

Διόνυσος

κόκκυ, μέθεσθε: καὶ πολύ γε κατωτέρω
χωρεῖ τὸ τοῦδε.

Εὐριπίδης
καὶ τί ποτ᾽ ἐστὶ ταἴτιον; **Διόνυσος**

ὅτι εἰσέθηκε ποταμόν, ἐριοπωλικῶς
ὑγρὸν ποιήσας τοὔπος ὥσπερ τἄρια,
σὺ δ᾽ εἰσέθηκας τοῦπος ἐπτερωμένον.

Εὐριπίδης

ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερον εἰπάτω τι κἀντιστησάτω.

Διόνυσος

λάβεσθε τοίνυν αὖθις.

Αἰσχύλος καί Εὐριπίδης
ἦν ἰδού.

Διόνυσος
λέγε.

Εὐριπίδης

‘οὐκ ἔστι Πειθοῦς ἱερὸν ἄλλο πλὴν λόγος.’

Αἰσχύλος

‘μόνος θεῶν γὰρ Θάνατος οὐ δώρων ἐρᾷ.’

Διόνυσος

μέθεσθε μέθεσθε: καὶ τὸ τοῦδέ γ᾽ αὖ ῥέπει:
θάνατον γὰρ εἰσέθηκε βαρύτατον κακόν.

Εὐριπίδης

ἐγὼ δὲ πειθώ γ᾽ ἔπος ἄριστ᾽ εἰρημένον.

Διόνυσος

πειθὼ δὲ κοῦφόν ἐστι καὶ νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον.
ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερον αὖ ζήτει τι τῶν βαρυστάθμων,
ὅ τι σοι καθέλξει, καρτερόν τε καὶ μέγα.

Εὐριπίδης

φέρε ποῦ τοιοῦτον δῆτά μοὐστί; ποῦ;

Διόνυσος
φράσω:
‘βέβληκ᾽ Ἀχιλλεὺς δύο κύβω καὶ τέτταρα.’
λέγοιτ᾽ ἄν, ὡς αὕτη ‘στὶ λοιπὴ σφῷν στάσις.

Εὐριπίδης

‘σιδηροβριθές τ᾽ ἔλαβε δεξιᾷ ξύλον.’

Αἰσχύλος

‘ἐφ᾽ ἅρματος γὰρ ἅρμα καὶ νεκρῷ νεκρός.’

Διόνυσος

ἐξηπάτηκεν αὖ σὲ καὶ νῦν.

Εὐριπίδης
τῷ τρόπῳ; **Διόνυσος**

δύ᾽ ἅρματ᾽ εἰσέθηκε καὶ νεκρὼ δύο,
οὓς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιντ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἑκατὸν Αἰγύπτιοι.

Αἰσχύλος

καὶ μηκέτ᾽ ἔμοιγε κατ᾽ ἔπος, ἀλλ᾽ ἐς τὸν σταθμὸν
αὐτὸς τὰ παιδί᾽ ἡ γυνὴ Κηφισοφῶν
ἐμβὰς καθήσθω, συλλαβὼν τὰ βιβλία:
ἐγὼ δὲ δύ᾽ ἔπη τῶν ἐμῶν ἐρῶ μόνον.

Διόνυσος

ἄνδρες φίλοι, κἀγὼ μὲν αὐτοὺς οὐ κρινῶ.
οὐ γὰρ δι᾽ ἔχθρας οὐδετέρῳ γενήσομαι.
τὸν μὲν γὰρ ἡγοῦμαι σοφὸν τῷ δ᾽ ἥδομαι.

Πλούτων

οὐδὲν ἄρα πράξεις ὧνπερ ἦλθες οὕνεκα;

Διόνυσος

ἐὰν δὲ κρίνω;

Πλούτων
τὸν ἕτερον λαβὼν ἄπει,
ὁπότερον ἂν κρίνῃς, ἵν᾽ ἔλθῃς μὴ μάτην.

Διόνυσος

εὐδαιμονοίης. φέρε πύθεσθέ μου ταδί.
ἐγὼ κατῆλθον ἐπὶ ποιητήν. τοῦ χάριν;
ἵν᾽ ἡ πόλις σωθεῖσα τοὺς χοροὺς ἄγῃ.

ὁπότερος οὖν ἂν τῇ πόλει παραινέσῃ
μᾶλλόν τι χρηστόν, τοῦτον ἄξειν μοι δοκῶ.
πρῶτον μὲν οὖν περὶ Ἀλκιβιάδου τίν᾽ ἔχετον
γνώμην ἑκάτερος; ἡ πόλις γὰρ δυστοκεῖ.

Εὐριπίδης

ἔχει δὲ περὶ αὐτοῦ τίνα γνώμην;

Διόνυσος

τίνα;
ποθεῖ μέν, ἐχθαίρει δέ, βούλεται δ᾽ ἔχειν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅ τι νοεῖτον εἶπατον τούτου πέρι.

Εὐριπίδης

μισῶ πολίτην, ὅστις ὠφελεῖν πάτραν
βραδὺς πέφυκε μεγάλα δὲ βλάπτειν ταχύς,
καὶ πόριμον αὑτῷ τῇ πόλει δ᾽ ἀμήχανον.

Διόνυσος

εὖ γ᾽ ὦ Πόσειδον: σὺ δὲ τίνα γνώμην ἔχεις;

Δις.

οὐ χρὴ λέοντος σκύμνον ἐν πόλει τρέφειν,
μάλιστα μὲν λέοντα μὴ ν᾽ πόλει τρέφειν,
ἢν δ᾽ ἐκτραφῇ τις, τοῖς τρόποις ὑπηρετεῖν.

Διόνυσος

νὴ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτῆρα δυσκρίτως γ᾽ ἔχω:
ὁ μὲν σοφῶς γὰρ εἶπεν, ὁ δ᾽ ἕτερος σαφῶς.
ἀλλ᾽ ἔτι μίαν γνώμην ἑκάτερος εἶπατον
περὶ τῆς πόλεως ἥντιν᾽ ἔχετον σωτηρίαν.

Εὐριπίδης

εἴ τις πτερώσας Κλεόκριτον Κινησίᾳ,

αἴροιεν αὖραι πελαγίαν ὑπὲρ πλάκα.

Διόνυσος

γέλοιον ἂν φαίνοιτο: νοῦν δ᾽ ἔχει τίνα;

Εὐριπίδης

εἰ ναυμαχοῖεν κᾆτ᾽ ἔχοντες ὀξίδας
ῥαίνοιεν ἐς τὰ βλέφαρα τῶν ἐναντίων.
ἐγὼ μὲν οἶδα καὶ θέλω φράζειν.

Διόνυσος
λέγε.

Εὐριπίδης

ὅταν τὰ νῦν ἄπιστα πίσθ᾽ ἡγώμεθα,
τὰ δ᾽ ὄντα πίστ᾽ ἄπιστα.

Διόνυσος
πῶς; οὐ μανθάνω.
ἀμαθέστερόν πως εἰπὲ καὶ σαφέστερον.

Εὐριπίδης

εἰ τῶν πολιτῶν οἷσι νῦν πιστεύομεν,
τούτοις ἀπιστήσαιμεν, οἷς δ᾽ οὐ χρώμεθα,
τούτοισι χρησαίμεσθ᾽, ἴσως σωθεῖμεν ἄν.
εἰ νῦν γε δυστυχοῦμεν ἐν τούτοισι, πῶς
τἀναντί᾽ ἂν πράττοντες οὐ σῳζοίμεθ᾽ ἄν; **Διόνυσος**

εὖ γ᾽ ὦ Παλάμηδες, ὦ σοφωτάτη φύσις.
ταυτὶ πότερ᾽ αὐτὸς ηὗρες ἢ Κηφισοφῶν;

Εὐριπίδης

ἐγὼ μόνος: τὰς δ᾽ ὀξίδας Κηφισοφῶν.
τί δαὶ σύ; τί λέγεις;

Αἰσχύλος
τὴν πόλιν νῦν μοι φράσον
πρῶτον τίσι χρῆται: πότερα τοῖς χρηστοῖς; **Διόνυσος**
πόθεν;
μισεῖ κάκιστα.

Αἰσχύλος
τοῖς πονηροῖς δ᾽ ἥδεται; **Διόνυσος**

οὐ δῆτ᾽ ἐκείνη γ᾽, ἀλλὰ χρῆται πρὸς βίαν.

Αἰσχύλος

πῶς οὖν τις ἂν σώσειε τοιαύτην πόλιν,
ᾗ μήτε χλαῖνα μήτε σισύρα συμφέρει;

Διόνυσος

εὕρισκε νὴ Δί᾽, εἴπερ ἀναδύσει πάλιν.

Αἰσχύλος

ἐκεῖ φράσαιμ᾽ ἄν: ἐνθαδὶ δ᾽ οὐ βούλομαι.

Διόνυσος

μὴ δῆτα σύ γ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐνθένδ᾽ ἀνίει τἀγαθά.

Αἰσχύλος

τὴν γῆν ὅταν νομίσωσι τὴν τῶν πολεμίων
εἶναι σφετέραν, τὴν δὲ σφετέραν τῶν πολεμίων,
πόρον δὲ τὰς ναῦς ἀπορίαν δὲ τὸν πόρον.

Διόνυσος

εὖ, πλήν γ᾽ ὁ δικαστὴς αὐτὰ καταπίνει μόνος.

Πλούτων

κρίνοις ἄν.

Διόνυσος
αὕτη σφῷν κρίσις γενήσεται:
αἱρήσομαι γὰρ ὅνπερ ἡ ψυχὴ θέλει.

Εὐριπίδης

μεμνημένος νυν τῶν θεῶν οὓς ὤμοσας
ἦ μὴν ἀπάξειν μ᾽ οἴκαδ᾽, αἱροῦ τοὺς φίλους.

Διόνυσος

‘ἡ γλῶττ᾽ ὀμώμοκ᾽,’ Αἰσχύλον δ᾽ αἱρήσομαι.

Εὐριπίδης

τί δέδρακας ὦ μιαρώτατ᾽ ἀνθρώπων;

Διόνυσος
ἐγώ;
ἔκρινα νικᾶν Αἰσχύλον. τιὴ γὰρ οὔ; **Εὐριπίδης**

αἴσχιστον ἔργον προσβλέπεις μ᾽ εἰργασμένος;

Διόνυσος

τί δ᾽ αἰσχρόν, ἢν μὴ τοῖς θεωμένοις δοκῇ;

Εὐριπίδης

ὦ σχέτλιε περιόψει με δὴ τεθνηκότα;

Διόνυσος

τίς οἶδεν εἰ τὸ ζῆν μέν ἐστι κατθανεῖν,
τὸ πνεῖν δὲ δειπνεῖν, τὸ δὲ καθεύδειν κῴδιον; **Πλούτων**

χωρεῖτε τοίνυν ὦ Διόνυσ᾽ εἴσω.

Διόνυσος
τί δαί;

Πλούτων

ἵνα ξενίσω ‘γὼ σφὼ πρὶν ἀποπλεῖν.

Διόνυσος
εὖ λέγεις
νὴ τὸν Δί᾽: οὐ γὰρ ἄχθομαι τῷ πράγματι.

Χορός

μακάριός γ᾽ ἀνὴρ ἔχων
ξύνεσιν ἠκριβωμένην.
πάρα δὲ πολλοῖσιν μαθεῖν.
ὅδε γὰρ εὖ φρονεῖν δοκήσας
πάλιν ἄπεισιν οἴκαδ᾽ αὖ,
ἐπ᾽ ἀγαθῶ μὲν τοῖς πολίταις,
ἐπ᾽ ἀγαθῷ δὲ τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ
ξυγγενέσι τε καὶ φίλοισι,
διὰ τὸ συνετὸς εἶναι. **Χορός**

χαρίεν οὖν μὴ Σωκράτει
παρακαθήμενον λαλεῖν,
ἀποβαλόντα μουσικὴν
τά τε μέγιστα παραλιπόντα
τῆς τραγῳδικῆς τέχνης.
τὸ δ᾽ ἐπὶ σεμνοῖσιν λόγοισι
καὶ σκαριφησμοῖσι λήρων
διατριβὴν ἀργὸν ποιεῖσθαι,
παραφρονοῦντος ἀνδρός. **Πλούτων**

ἄγε δὴ χαίρων Αἰσχύλε χώρει,
καὶ σῷζε πόλιν τὴν ἡμετέραν
γνώμαις ἀγαθαῖς καὶ παίδευσον
τοὺς ἀνοήτους: πολλοὶ δ᾽ εἰσίν:
καὶ δὸς τουτὶ Κλεοφῶντι φέρων
καὶ τουτὶ τοῖσι πορισταῖς

Μύρμηκί θ᾽ ὁμοῦ καὶ Νικομάχῳ,
τόδε δ᾽ Ἀρχενόμῳ:
καὶ φράζ᾽ αὐτοῖς ταχέως ἥκειν
ὡς ἐμὲ δευρὶ καὶ μὴ μέλλειν:
κἂν μὴ ταχέως ἥκωσιν, ἐγὼ
νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω στίξας αὐτοὺς
καὶ συμποδίσας
μετ᾽ Ἀδειμάντου τοῦ Λευκολόφου
κατὰ γῆς ταχέως ἀποπέμψω. **Αἰσχύλος**

ταῦτα ποιήσω: σὺ δὲ τὸν θᾶκον
τὸν ἐμὸν παράδος Σοφοκλεῖ τηρεῖν
καὶ διασῴζειν, ἢν ἄρ᾽ ἐγώ ποτε
δεῦρ᾽ ἀφίκωμαι. τοῦτον γὰρ ἐγὼ
σοφίᾳ κρίνω δεύτερον εἶναι.
μέμνησο δ᾽ ὅπως ὁ πανοῦργος ἀνὴρ
καὶ ψευδολόγος καὶ βωμολόχος
μηδέποτ᾽ ἐς τὸν θᾶκον τὸν ἐμὸν
μηδ᾽ ἄκων ἐγκαθεδεῖται.

Πλούτων

φαίνετε τοίνυν ὑμεῖς τούτῳ
λαμπάδας ἱεράς, χἅμα προπέμπετε
τοῖσιν τούτου τοῦτον μέλεσιν
καὶ μολπαῖσιν κελαδοῦντες.

Χορός

πρῶτα μὲν εὐοδίαν ἀγαθὴν ἀπιόντι ποιητῇ
ἐς φάος ὀρνυμένῳ δότε δαίμονες οἱ κατὰ γαίας,
τῇ δὲ πόλει μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν ἀγαθὰς ἐπινοίας.
πάγχυ γὰρ ἐκ μεγάλων ἀχέων παυσαίμεθ᾽ ἂν οὕτως
ἀργαλέων τ᾽ ἐν ὅπλοις ξυνόδων. Κλεοφῶν δὲ μαχέσθω
κἄλλος ὁ βουλόμενος τούτων πατρίοις ἐν ἀρούραις.

THE ASSEMBLYWOMEN

Πραξάγορα

Ὦ λαμπρὸν ὄμμα τοῦ τροχηλάτου λύχνου
κάλλιστ᾽ ἐν εὐστόχοισιν ἐζητημένον:
γονάς τε γὰρ σὰς καὶ τύχας δηλώσομεν:
τροχῷ γὰρ ἐλαθεὶς κεραμικῆς ῥύμης ὕπο
μυκτῆρσι λαμπρὰς ἡλίου τιμὰς ἔχεις:
ὅρμα φλογὸς σημεῖα τὰ ξυγκείμενα.
σοὶ γὰρ μόνῳ δηλοῦμεν εἰκότως, ἐπεὶ
κἀν τοῖσι δωματίοισιν Ἀφροδίτης τρόπων
πειρωμέναισι πλησίον παραστατεῖς,
λορδουμένων τε σωμάτων ἐπιστάτην
ὀφθαλμὸν οὐδεὶς τὸν σὸν ἐξείργει δόμων.
μόνος δὲ μηρῶν εἰς ἀπορρήτους μυχοὺς
λάμπεις ἀφεύων τὴν ἐπανθοῦσαν τρίχα:
στοάς τε καρποῦ Βακχίου τε νάματος
πλήρεις ὑποιγνύσαισι συμπαραστατεῖς:
καὶ ταῦτα συνδρῶν οὐ λαλεῖς τοῖς πλησίον.
ἀνθ᾽ ὧν συνείσει καὶ τὰ νῦν βουλεύματα
ὅσα Σκίροις ἔδοξε ταῖς ἐμαῖς φίλαις.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐδεμία πάρεστιν ἃς ἥκειν ἐχρῆν.
καίτοι πρὸς ὄρθρον γ᾽ ἐστίν: ἡ δ᾽ ἐκκλησία
αὐτίκα μάλ᾽ ἔσται: καταλαβεῖν δ᾽ ἡμᾶς ἕδρας,
ἃς Φυρόμαχός ποτ᾽ εἶπεν, εἰ μέμνησθ᾽ ἔτι,
δεῖ τὰς ἑτέρας πως κἀγκαθεζομένας λαθεῖν.
τί δῆτ᾽ ἂν εἴη; πότερον οὐκ ἐρραμμένους
ἔχουσι τοὺς πώγωνας, οὓς εἴρητ᾽ ἔχειν;
ἢ θαιμάτια τἀνδρεῖα κλεψάσαις λαθεῖν
ἦν χαλεπὸν αὐταῖς; ἀλλ᾽ ὁρῶ τονδὶ λύχνον
προσιόντα. φέρε νυν ἐπαναχωρήσω πάλιν,
μὴ καί τις ὢν ἀνὴρ ὁ προσιὼν τυγχάνῃ.

Γυνὴ Α

ὥρα βαδίζειν, ὡς ὁ κῆρυξ ἀρτίως
ἡμῶν προσιουσῶν δεύτερον κεκόκκυκεν.

Πραξάγορα

ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ ὑμᾶς προσδοκῶσ᾽ ἠγρηγόρη
τὴν νύκτα πᾶσαν. ἀλλὰ φέρε τὴν γείτονα
τήνδ᾽ ἐκκαλέσωμαι θρυγονῶσα τὴν θύραν.
δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ αὐτῆς λαθεῖν.

Γυνὴ Β

ἤκουσά τοι
ὑποδουμένη τὸ κνῦμά σου τῶν δακτύλων,
ἅτ᾽ οὐ καταδαρθοῦσ᾽. ὁ γὰρ ἀνὴρ ᾧ φιλτάτη,
Σαλαμίνιος γάρ ἐστιν ᾧ ξύνειμ᾽ ἐγώ,
τὴν νύχθ᾽ ὅλην ἤλαυνέ μ᾽ ἐν τοῖς στρώμασιν,
ὥστ᾽ ἄρτι τουτὶ θοἰμάτιον αὐτοῦ ‘λαβον.

Γυνὴ Α

καὶ μὴν ὁρῶ καὶ Κλειναρέτην καὶ Σωστράτην
προσιοῦσαν ἤδη τήνδε καὶ Φιλαινέτην.

Πραξάγορα

οὔκουν ἐπείξεσθ᾽; ὡς Γλύκη κατώμοσεν
τὴν ὑστάτην ἥκουσαν οἴνου τρεῖς χοᾶς
ἡμῶν ἀποτείσειν κἀρεβίνθων χοίνικα.

Γυνὴ Α

τὴν Σμικυθίωνος δ᾽ οὐχ ὁρᾷς Μελιστίχην
σπεύδουσαν ἐν ταῖς ἐμβάσιν;

Πραξάγορα

καίτοι δοκεῖ
κατὰ σχολὴν παρὰ τἀνδρὸς ἐξελθεῖν μόνη.

Γυνὴ Α

τὴν τοῦ καπήλου δ᾽ οὐχ ὁρᾷς Γευσιστράτην
ἔχουσαν ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ τὴν λαμπάδα;

Γυνὴ Β

καὶ τὴν Φιλοδωρήτου τε καὶ Χαιρητάδου
ὁρῶ προσιούσας χἀτέρας πολλὰς πάνυ
γυναῖκας, ὅ τι πέρ ἐστ᾽ ὄφελος ἐν τῇ πόλει.

Γυνὴ Γ

καὶ πάνυ ταλαιπώρως ἔγωγ᾽ ὦ φιλτάτη
ἐκδρᾶσα παρέδυν. ὁ γὰρ ἀνὴρ τὴν νύχθ᾽ ὅλην
ἔβηττε τριχίδων ἐσπέρας ἐμπλήμενος.

Πραξάγορα

κάθησθε τοίνυν, ὡς ἂν ἀνέρωμαι τάδε
ὑμᾶς, ἐπειδὴ συλλελεγμένας ὁρῶ,
ὅσα Σκίροις ἔδοξεν εἰ δεδράκατε.

Γυνὴ Α

ἔγωγε. πρῶτον μέν γ᾽ ἔχω τὰς μασχάλας
λόχμης δασυτέρας, καθάπερ ἦν ξυγκείμενον:
ἔπειθ᾽ ὁπόθ᾽ ἀνὴρ εἰς ἀγορὰν οἴχοιτό μου,
ἀλειψαμένη τὸ σῶμ᾽ ὅλον δι᾽ ἡμέρας
ἐχραινόμην ἑστῶσα πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον.

Γυνὴ Β

κἄγωγε: τὸ ξυρὸν δέ γ᾽ ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας
ἔρριψα πρῶτον, ἵνα δασυνθείην ὅλη
καὶ μηδὲν εἴην ἔτι γυναικὶ προσφερής.

Πραξάγορα

ἔχετε δὲ τοὺς πώγωνας, οὓς εἴρητ᾽ ἔχειν
πάσαισιν ἡμῖν, ὁπότε συλλεγοίμεθα;

Γυνὴ Α

νὴ τὴν Ἑκάτην καλόν γ᾽ ἔγωγε τουτονί.

Γυνὴ Β

κἄγωγ᾽ Ἐπικράτους οὐκ ὀλίγῳ καλλίονα.

Πραξάγορα

ὑμεῖς δὲ τί φατε;

Γυνὴ Α
φασί: κατανεύουσι γάρ.

Πραξάγορα

καὶ μὴν τά γ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ὑμῖν ὁρῶ πεπραγμένα.
Λακωνικὰς γὰρ ἔχετε καὶ βακτηρίας
καὶ θαἰμάτια τἀνδρεῖα, καθάπερ εἴπομεν.

Γυνὴ Α

ἔγωγέ τοι τὸ σκύταλον ἐξηνεγκάμην
τὸ τοῦ Λαμίου τουτὶ καθεύδοντος λάθρᾳ.

Γυνὴ Β

τοῦτ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐκείνων τῶν σκυτάλων ὧν πέρδεται.

Πραξάγορα

νὴ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτῆρ᾽ ἐπιτήδειός γ᾽ ἂν ἦν
τὴν τοῦ πανόπτου διφθέραν ἐνημμένος
εἴπερ τις ἄλλος βουκολεῖν τὸ δήμιον.
ἀλλ᾽ ἄγεθ᾽ ὅπως καὶ τἀπὶ τούτοις δράσομεν,
ἕως ἔτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἄστρα κατὰ τὸν οὐρανόν:
ἡκκλησία δ᾽, εἰς ἣν παρεσκευάσμεθα
ἡμεῖς βαδίζειν, ἐξ ἕω γενήσεται.

Γυνὴ Α

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ὥστε δεῖ σε καταλαβεῖν ἕδρας
ὑπὸ τῷ λίθῳ τῶν πρυτάνεων καταντικρύ.

Γυνὴ Β

ταυτί γέ τοι νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἐφερόμην, ἵνα
πληρουμένης ξαίνοιμι τῆς ἐκκλησίας.

Πραξάγορα

πληρουμένης τάλαινα;

Γυνὴ Β
νὴ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν
ἔγωγε. τί γὰρ ἂν χεῖρον ἀκροώμην ἄρα
ξαίνουσα; γυμνὰ δ᾽ ἐστί μου τὰ παιδία.

Πραξάγορα

ἰδού γέ σε ξαίνουσαν, ἢν τοῦ σώματος
οὐδὲν παραφῆναι τοῖς καθημένοις ἔδει.
οὐκοῦν καλά γ᾽ ἂν πάθοιμεν, εἰ πλήρης τύχοι
ὁ δῆμος ὢν κἄπειθ᾽ ὑπερβαίνουσά τις
ἀναβαλλομένη δείξειε τὸν Φορμίσιον.
ἢν δ᾽ ἐγκαθεζώμεσθα πρότεραι, λήσομεν
ξυστειλάμεναι θαἰμάτια: τὸν πώγωνά τε
ὅταν καθῶμεν ὃν περιδησόμεσθ᾽ ἐκεῖ,
τίς οὐκ ἂν ἡμᾶς ἄνδρας ἡγήσαιθ᾽ ὁρῶν;

Γυνὴ Α

Ἀγύρριος γοῦν τὸν Προνόμου πώγων᾽ ἔχων
λέληθε: καίτοι πρότερον ἦν οὗτος γυνή:
νυνὶ δ᾽, ὁρᾷς, πράττει τὰ μέγιστ᾽ ἐν τῇ πόλει.

Πραξάγορα

τούτου γε τοίνυν τὴν ἐπιοῦσαν ἡμέραν
τόλμημα τολμῶμεν τοσοῦτον οὕνεκα,
ἵν πως παραλαβεῖν τῆς πόλεως τὰ πράγματα
δυνώμεθ᾽, ὥστ᾽ ἀγαθόν τι πρᾶξαι τὴν πόλιν:
νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὔτε θέομεν οὔτ᾽ ἐλαύνομεν.

Γυνὴ Α

καὶ πῶς γυναικῶν θηλύφρων ξυνουσία
δημηγορήσει;

Πραξάγορα
πολὺ μὲν οὖν ἄριστά που.
λέγουσι γὰρ καὶ τῶν νεανίσκων ὅσοι
πλεῖστα σποδοῦνται, δεινοτάτους εἶναι λέγειν:
ἡμῖν δ᾽ ὑπάρχει τοῦτο κατὰ τύχην τινά.

Γυνὴ Α

οὐκ οἶδα: δεινὸν δ᾽ ἐστὶν ἡ μὴ ‘μπειρία.

Πραξάγορα

οὐκοῦν ἐπίτηδες ξυνελέγημεν ἐνθάδε,
ὅπως προμελετήσωμεν ἀκεῖ δεῖ λέγειν.
οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις τὸ γένειον ἂν περιδουμένη
ἄλλαι θ᾽ ὅσαι λαλεῖν μεμελετήκασί που.

Γυνὴ Α

τίς δ᾽ ὦ μέλ᾽ ἡμῶν οὐ λαλεῖν ἐπίσταται;

Πραξάγορα

ἴθι δὴ σὺ περιδοῦ καὶ ταχέως ἀνὴρ γενοῦ:
ἐγὼ δὲ θεῖσα τοὺς στεφάνους περιδήσομαι
καὐτὴ μεθ᾽ ὑμῶν, ἤν τί μοι δόξῃ λέγειν.

Γυνὴ Α

δεῦρ᾽ ὦ γλυκυτάτη Πραξαγόρα, σκέψαι τάλαν
ὡς καὶ καταγέλαστον τὸ πρᾶγμα φαίνεται.

Πραξάγορα

πῶς καταγέλαστον;

Γυνὴ Α
ὥσπερ εἴ τις σηπίαις
πώγωνα περιδήσειεν ἐσταθευμέναις.

Πραξάγορα

ὁ περιστίαρχος, περιφέρειν χρὴ τὴν γαλῆν.
πάριτ᾽ ἐς τὸ πρόσθεν. Ἀρίφραδες παῦσαι λαλῶν.
κάθιζε παριών. τίς ἀγορεύειν βούλεται;

Γυνὴ Α

ἐγώ.

Πραξάγορα
περίθου δὴ τὸν στέφανον τύχἀγαθῇ.

Γυνὴ Α

ἰδού.

Πραξάγορα
λέγοις ἄν.

Γυνὴ Α
εἶτα πρὶν πιεῖν λέγω;

Πραξάγορα

ἰδοὺ πιεῖν.

Γυνὴ Α
τί γὰρ ὦ μέλ᾽ ἐστεφανωσάμην;

Πραξάγορα

ἄπιθ᾽ ἐκποδών: τοιαῦτ᾽ ἂν ἡμᾶς ἠργάσω
κἀκεῖ.

Γυνὴ Α

τί δ᾽; οὐ πίνουσι κἀν τῇκκλησίᾳ;

Πραξάγορα

ἰδού γε σοὶ πίνουσι.

Γυνὴ Α
νὴ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν
καὶ ταῦτα γ᾽ εὔζωρον. τὰ γοῦν βουλεύματα
αὐτῶν ὅσ᾽ ἂν πράξωσιν ἐνθυμουμένοις
ὥσπερ μεθυόντων ἐστὶ παραπεπληγμένα.
καὶ νὴ Δία σπένδουσί γ᾽: ἢ τίνος χάριν
τοσαῦτ᾽ ἂν ηὔχοντ᾽, εἴπερ οἶνος μὴ παρῆν;
καὶ λοιδοροῦνταί γ᾽ ὥσπερ ἐμπεπωκότες,
καὶ τὸν παροινοῦντ᾽ ἐκφέρουσ᾽ οἱ τοξόται,

Πραξάγορα

σὺ μὲν βάδιζε καὶ κάθησ᾽: οὐδὲν γὰρ εἶ.

Γυνὴ Α

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἦ μοι μὴ γενειᾶν κρεῖττον ἦν:
δίψῃ γάρ, ὡς ἔοικ᾽, ἀφαυανθήσομαι.

Πραξάγορα

ἔσθ᾽ ἥτις ἑτέρα βούλεται λέγειν;

Γυνὴ Β
ἐγώ.

Πραξάγορα

ἴθι δὴ στεφανοῦ: καὶ γὰρ τὸ χρῆμ᾽ ἐργάζεται.
ἄγε νυν ὅπως ἀνδριστὶ καὶ καλῶς ἐρεῖς
διερεισαμένη τὸ σχῆμα τῇ βακτηρίᾳ.

Γυνὴ Β

ἐβουλόμην μὲν ἂν ἕτερον τῶν ἠθάδων
λέγειν τὰ βέλτισθ᾽, ἵν᾽ ἐκαθήμην ἥσυχος:
νῦν δ᾽ οὐκ ἐάσω κατά γε τὴν ἐμὴν μίαν
ἐν τοῖς καπηλείοισι λάκκους ἐμποιεῖν
ὕδατος. ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ δοκεῖ μὰ τὼ θεώ.

Πραξάγορα

μὰ τὼ θεώ; τάλαινα ποῦ τὸν νοῦν ἔχεις;

Γυνὴ Β

τί δ᾽ ἔστιν; οὐ γὰρ δὴ πιεῖν γ᾽ ᾔτησά σε.

Πραξάγορα

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἀνὴρ ὢν τὼ θεὼ κατώμοσας,
καίτοι τά γ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ εἰποῦσα δεξιώτατα.

Γυνὴ Β

ὦ νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω.

Πραξάγορα
παῦε τοίνυν, ὡς ἐγὼ
ἐκκλησιάσουσ᾽ οὐκ ἂν προβαίην τὸν πόδα
τὸν ἕτερον, εἰ μὴ ταῦτ᾽ ἀκριβωθήσεται.

Γυνὴ Β

φέρε τὸν στέφανον: ἐγὼ γὰρ αὖ λέξω πάλιν.
οἶμαι γὰρ ἤδη μεμελετηκέναι καλῶς.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ ὦ γυναῖκες αἱ καθήμεναι —

Πραξάγορα

γυναῖκας αὖ δύστηνε τοὺς ἄνδρας λέγεις;

Γυνὴ Β

δι᾽ Ἐπίγονόν γ᾽ ἐκεῖνον: ἐπιβλέψασα γὰρ
ἐκεῖσε πρὸς γυναῖκας ᾠόμην λέγειν.

Πραξάγορα

ἄπερρε καὶ σὺ καὶ κάθησ᾽ ἐντευθενί:
αὐτὴ γὰρ ὑμῶν γ᾽ ἕνεκά μοι λέξειν δοκῶ
τονδὶ λαβοῦσα. τοῖς θεοῖς μὲν εὔχομαι
τυχεῖν κατορθώσασα τὰ βεβουλευμένα.
ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ἴσον μὲν τῆσδε τῆς χώρας μέτα
ὅσονπερ ὑμῖν: ἄχθομαι δὲ καὶ φέρω
τὰ τῆς πόλεως ἅπαντα βαρέως πράγματα.
ὁρῶ γὰρ αὐτὴν προστάταισι χρωμένην
ἀεὶ πονηροῖς: κἄν τις ἡμέραν μίαν
χρηστὸς γένηται, δέκα πονηρὸς γίγνεται.
ἐπέτρεψας ἑτέρῳ: πλείον᾽ ἔτι δράσει κακά.
χαλεπὸν μὲν οὖν ἄνδρας δυσαρέστους νουθετεῖν,
οἳ τοὺς φιλεῖν μὲν βουλομένους δεδοίκατε,
τοὺς δ᾽ οὐκ ἐθέλοντας ἀντιβολεῖθ᾽ ἑκάστοτε.
ἐκκλησίαισιν ἦν ὅτ᾽ οὐκ ἐχρώμεθα
οὐδὲν τὸ παράπαν: ἀλλὰ τόν γ᾽ Ἀγύρριον
πονηρὸν ἡγούμεσθα: νῦν δὲ χρωμένων
ὁ μὲν λαβὼν ἀργύριον ὑπερεπήνεσεν,
ὁ δ᾽ οὐ λαβὼν εἶναι θανάτου φήσ᾽ ἀξίους
τοὺς μισθοφορεῖν ζητοῦντας ἐν τἠκκλησίᾳ.

Γυνὴ Α

νὴ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην εὖ γε ταυταγὶ λέγεις.

Πραξάγορα

τάλαιν᾽ Ἀφροδίτην ὤμοσας; χαρίεντά γ᾽ ἂν
ἔδρασας, εἰ τοῦτ᾽ εἶπας ἐν τἠκκλησίᾳ.

Γυνὴ Α

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἂν εἶπον.

Πραξάγορα

μηδ᾽ ἐθίζου νῦν λέγειν.
τὸ συμμαχικὸν αὖ τοῦθ᾽, ὅτ᾽ ἐσκοπούμεθα,
εἰ μὴ γένοιτ᾽, ἀπολεῖν ἔφασκον τὴν πόλιν:
ὅτε δὴ δ᾽ ἐγένετ᾽, ἦχθοντο, τῶν δὲ ῥητόρων
ὁ τοῦτ᾽ ἀναπείσας εὐθὺς ἀποδρὰς ᾤχετο.
ναῦς δεῖ καθέλκειν: τῷ πένητι μὲν δοκεῖ,
τοῖς πλουσίοις δὲ καὶ γεωργοῖς οὐ δοκεῖ.
Κορινθίοις ἄχθεσθε, κἀκεῖνοί γέ σοι:
νῦν εἰσὶ χρηστοί, καὶ σύ νυν χρηστὸς γενοῦ.
Ἀργεῖος ἀμαθής, ἀλλ᾽ Ἱερώνυμος σοφός:
σωτηρία παρέκυψεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὠρᾴζεται
Θρασύβουλος αὐτὸς οὐχὶ παρακαλούμενος.

Γυνὴ Α

ὡς ξυνετὸς ἀνήρ.

Πραξάγορα
νῦν καλῶς ἐπῄνεσας.
ὑμεῖς γάρ ἐστ᾽ ὦ δῆμε τούτων αἴτιοι.
τὰ δημόσια γὰρ μισθοφοροῦντες χρήματα
ἰδίᾳ σκοπεῖσθ᾽ ἕκαστος ὅ τι τις κερδανεῖ,
τὸ δὲ κοινὸν ὥσπερ Αἴσιμος κυλίνδεται.
ἢν οὖν ἐμοὶ πίθησθε, σωθήσεσθ᾽ ἔτι.
ταῖς γὰρ γυναιξὶ φημὶ χρῆναι τὴν πόλιν
ἡμᾶς παραδοῦναι. καὶ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις
ταύταις ἐπιτρόποις καὶ ταμίαισι χρώμεθα.

Γυνὴ Α

εὖ γ᾽ εὖ γε νὴ Δί᾽ εὖ γε.

Γυνὴ Β
λέγε λέγ᾽ ὦγαθέ.

Πραξάγορα

ὡς δ᾽ εἰσὶν ἡμῶν τοὺς τρόπους βελτίονες
ἐγὼ διδάξω. πρῶτα μὲν γὰρ τἄρια

βάπτουσι θερμῷ κατὰ τὸν ἀρχαῖον νόμον
ἀπαξάπασαι, κοὐχὶ μεταπειρωμένας
ἴδοις ἂν αὐτάς. ἡ δ᾽ Ἀθηναίων πόλις,
εἰ τοῦτο χρηστῶς εἶχεν, οὐκ ἂν ἐσῴζετο,
εἰ μή τι καινὸν ἄλλο περιηργάζετο.
καθήμεναι φρύγουσιν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ:
ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς φέρουσιν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ:
τὰ Θεσμοφόρι᾽ ἄγουσιν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ:
πέττουσι τοὺς πλακοῦντας ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ:
τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐπιτρίβουσιν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ:
μοιχοὺς ἔχουσιν ἔνδον ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ:
αὐταῖς παροψωνοῦσιν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ:
οἶνον φιλοῦσ᾽ εὔζωρον ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ:
βινούμεναι χαίρουσιν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ.
ταύταισιν οὖν ὦνδρες παραδόντες τὴν πόλιν
μὴ περιλαλῶμεν, μηδὲ πυνθανώμεθα
τί ποτ᾽ ἄρα δρᾶν μέλλουσιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἁπλῷ τρόπῳ
ἐῶμεν ἄρχειν, σκεψάμενοι ταυτὶ μόνα,
ὡς τοὺς στρατιώτας πρῶτον οὖσαι μητέρες
σῴζειν ἐπιθυμήσουσιν: εἶτα σιτία
τίς τῆς τεκούσης μᾶλλον ἐπιπέμψειεν ἄν;
χρήματα πορίζειν εὐπορώτατον γυνή,
ἄρχουσά τ᾽ οὐκ ἂν ἐξαπατηθείη ποτέ:
αὐταὶ γάρ εἰσιν ἐξαπατᾶν εἰθισμέναι.
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἐάσω: ταῦτ᾽ ἐὰν πίθησθέ μοι,
εὐδαιμονοῦντες τὸν βίον διάξετε.

Γυνὴ Α

εὖ γ᾽ ὦ γλυκυτάτη Πραξαγόρα καὶ δεξιῶς.
πόθεν ὦ τάλαινα ταῦτ᾽ ἔμαθες οὕτω καλῶς;

Πραξάγορα

ἐν ταῖς φυγαῖς μετὰ τἀνδρὸς ᾤκησ᾽ ἐν πυκνί:
ἔπειτ᾽ ἀκούουσ᾽ ἐξέμαθον τῶν ῥητόρων.

Γυνὴ Α

245 οὐκ ἐτὸς ἄρ᾽ ὦ μέλ᾽ ἦσθα δεινὴ καὶ σοφή:
καί σε στρατηγεῖν αἱ γυναῖκες αὐτόθεν
αἱρούμεθ᾽, ἢν ταῦθ᾽ ἁπινοεῖς κατεργάσῃ.
ἀτὰρ ἦν Κέφαλός σοι λοιδορῆται προσφθαρείς,
πῶς ἀντερεῖς πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐν τἠκκλησίᾳ;

Πραξάγορα

250 φήσω παραφρονεῖν αὐτόν.

Γυνὴ Α
ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γε
ἴσασι πάντες.

Πραξάγορα
ἀλλὰ καὶ μελαγχολᾶν.

Γυνὴ Α

καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἴσασιν.

Πραξάγορα
ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ τρύβλια
κακῶς κεραμεύειν, τὴν δὲ πόλιν εὖ καὶ καλῶς.

Γυνὴ Α

τί δ᾽ ἦν Νεοκλείδης ὁ γλάμων σε λοιδορῇ;

Πραξάγορα

255 τούτῳ μὲν εἶπον ἐς κυνὸς πυγὴν ὁρᾶν.

Γυνὴ Α

τί δ᾽ ἦν ὑποκρούωσίν σε;

Πραξάγορα
προσκινήσομαι
ἅτ᾽ οὐκ ἄπειρος οὖσα πολλῶν κρουμάτων.

Γυνὴ Α

ἐκεῖνο μόνον ἄσκεπτον, ἢν σ᾽ οἱ τοξόται
ἕλκωσιν, ὅ τι δράσεις ποτ᾽.

Πραξάγορα
ἐξαγκωνιῶ
ὠδί: μέση γὰρ οὐδέποτε ληφθήσομαι.

Γυνὴ Β

ἡμεῖς δέ γ᾽, ἢν αἴρωσ᾽, ἐᾶν κελεύσομεν.

Γυνὴ Α

ταυτὶ μὲν ἡμῖν ἐντεθύμηται καλῶς
ἐκεῖνο δ᾽ οὐ πεφροντίκαμεν, ὅτῳ τρόπῳ
τὰς χεῖρας αἴρειν μνημονεύσομεν τότε.
εἰθισμέναι γάρ ἐσμεν αἴρειν τὼ σκέλει.

Πραξάγορα

χαλεπὸν τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽: ὅμως δὲ χειροτονητέον
ἐξωμισάσαις τὸν ἕτερον βραχίονα.
ἄγε νυν ἀναστέλλεσθ᾽ ἄνω τὰ χιτώνια:
ὑποδεῖσθε δ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα τὰς Λακωνικάς,
ὥσπερ τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἐθεᾶσθ᾽, ὅτ᾽ εἰς ἐκκλησίαν
μέλλοι βαδίζειν ἢ θύραζ᾽ ἐκάστοτε.
ἔπειτ᾽ ἐπειδὰν ταῦτα πάντ᾽ ἔχῃ καλῶς,
περιδεῖσθε τοὺς πώγωνας. ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν δέ γε
τούτους ἀκριβώσητε περιηρμοσμέναι,
καὶ θαἰμάτια τἀνδρεῖά γ᾽ ἅπερ ἐκλέψατε
ἐπαναβάλεσθε, κᾆτα ταῖς βακτηρίαις
ἐπερειδόμεναι βαδίζετ᾽ ᾄδουσαι μέλος
πρεσβυτικόν τι, τὸν τρόπον μιμούμεναι
τὸν τῶν ἀγροίκων.

Γυνὴ Β
εὖ λέγεις: ἡμεῖς δέ γε
προΐωμεν αὐτῶν. καὶ γὰρ ἑτέρας οἴομαι

ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν ἐς τὴν πύκν᾽ ἥξειν ἄντικρυς
γυναῖκας.

Πραξάγορα
ἀλλὰ σπεύσαθ᾽ ὡς εἴωθ᾽ ἐκεῖ
τοῖς μὴ παροῦσιν ὀρθρίοις ἐς τὴν πύκνα
ὑπαποτρέχειν ἔχουσι μηδὲ πάτταλον.

Χορὸς

ὥρα προβαίνειν ὦνδρες ἡμῖν ἐστι: τοῦτο γὰρ χρὴ
μεμνημένας ἀεὶ λέγειν, ὡς μήποτ᾽ ἐξολίσθῃ
ἡμᾶς. ὁ κίνδυνος γὰρ οὐχὶ μικρός, ἢν ἁλῶμεν
ἐνδυόμεναι κατὰ σκότον τόλμημα τηλικοῦτον.

Χορός

χωρῶμεν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ὦνδρες: ἠπείλησε γὰρ
ὁ θεσμοθέτης, ὃς ἂν
μὴ πρῲ πάνυ τοῦ κνέφους
ἥκῃ κεκονιμένος,
στέργων σκοροδάλμῃ
βλέπων ὑπότριμμα, μὴ
δώσειν τὸ τριώβολον.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ Χαριτιμίδη
καὶ Σμίκυθε καὶ Δράκης
ἔπου κατεπείγων,
σαυτῷ προσέχων ὅπως
μηδὲν παραχορδιεῖς
ὧν δεῖ σ᾽ ἀποδεῖξαι:
ὅπως δὲ τὸ σύμβολον
λαβόντες ἔπειτα πλησίοι
καθεδούμεθ᾽, ὡς
ἂν χειροτονῶμεν
ἅπανθ᾽ ὁπόσ᾽ ἂν δέῃ
τὰς ἡμετέρας φίλας.
καίτοι τί λέγω; φίλους
γὰρ χρῆν μ᾽ ὀνομάζειν. **Χορός**

ὅρα δ᾽ ὅπως ὠθήσομεν τούσδε τοὺς ἐξ ἄστεως
ἥκοντας, ὅσοι πρὸ τοῦ
μέν, ἡνίκ᾽ ἔδει λαβεῖν
ἐλθόντ᾽ ὀβολὸν μόνον,
καθῆντο λαλοῦντες
ἐν τοῖς στεφανώμασιν,
νυνὶ δ᾽ ἐνοχλοῦσ᾽ ἄγαν.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐχί, Μυρωνίδης
ὅτ᾽ ἦρχεν ὁ γεννάδας,
οὐδεὶς ἂν ἐτόλμα
τὰ τῆς πόλεως διοικεῖν
ἀργύριον φέρων:
ἀλλ᾽ ἦκεν ἕκαστος
ἐν ἀσκιδίῳ φέρων
πιεῖν ἅμα τ᾽ ἄρτον αὐτῷ
καὶ δύο κρομμύω
καὶ τρεῖς ἂν ἐλάας.
νυνὶ δὲ τριώβολον
ζητοῦσι λαβεῖν, ὅταν
πράττωσί τι κοινὸν ὥσ-
περ πηλοφοροῦντες. **Βλέπυρος**

τί τὸ πρᾶγμα; ποῖ ποθ᾽ ἡ γυνὴ φρούδη ‘στί μοι;
ἐπεὶ πρὸς ἕω νῦν γ᾽ ἔστιν, ἡ δ᾽ οὐ φαίνεται.
ἐγὼ δὲ κατάκειμαι πάλαι χεζητιῶν,
τὰς ἐμβάδας ζητῶν λαβεῖν ἐν τῷ σκότῳ
καὶ θοἰμάτιον: ὅτε δὴ δ᾽ ἐκεῖνο ψηλαφῶν
οὐκ ἐδυνάμην εὑρεῖν, ὁ δ᾽ ἤδη τὴν θύραν
ἐπεῖχε κρούων ὁ κοπρεαῖος, λαμβάνω
τουτὶ τὸ τῆς γυναικὸς ἡμιδιπλοίδιον,
καὶ τὰς ἐκείνης Περσικὰς ὑφέλκομαι.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐν καθαρῷ ποῦ, ποῦ τις ἂν χέσας τύχοι;
ἢ πανταχοῦ τοι νυκτός ἐστιν ἐν καλῷ;
οὐ γάρ με νῦν χέζοντά γ᾽ οὐδεὶς ὄψεται.
οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ὅτι γέρων ὢν ἠγόμην
γυναῖχ᾽: ὅσας εἶμ᾽ ἄξιος πληγὰς λαβεῖν.
οὐ γάρ ποθ᾽ ὑγιὲς οὐδὲν ἐξελήλυθεν
δράσουσ᾽. ὅμως δ᾽ οὖν ἐστιν ἀποπατητέον.

Ἀνήρ

τίς ἔστιν; οὐ δήπου Βλέπυρος ὁ γειτνιῶν;

Βλέπυρος

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ αὐτὸς δῆτ᾽ ἐκεῖνος.

Ἀνήρ
εἰπέ μοι,
τί τοῦτό σοι τὸ πυρρόν ἐστιν; οὔτι που
Κινησίας σου κατατετίληκέν ποθεν;

Βλέπυρος

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τῆς γυναικὸς ἐξελήλυθα
τὸ κροκωτίδιον ἀμπισχόμενος οὐνδύεται.

Ἀνήρ

τὸ δ᾽ ἱμάτιόν σου ποῦ ‘στιν;

Βλέπυρος
οὐκ ἔχω φράσαι.
ζητῶν γὰρ αὖτ᾽ οὐχ ηὗρον ἐν τοῖς στρώμασιν.

Ἀνήρ

εἶτ᾽ οὐδὲ τὴν γυναῖκ᾽ ἐκέλευσάς σοι φράσαι;

Βλέπυρος

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ γὰρ ἔνδον οὖσα τυγχάνει,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκτετρύπηκεν λαθοῦσά μ᾽ ἔνδοθεν:
ὃ καὶ δέδοικα μή τι δρᾷ νεώτερον.

Ἀνήρ

νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ ταὐτὰ τοίνυν ἄντικρυς
ἐμοὶ πέπονθας. καὶ γὰρ ᾗ ξύνειμ᾽ ἐγὼ

φρούδη ‘στ’ ἔχουσα θοἰμάτιον οὐγὼ ‘φόρουν.
κοὐ τοῦτο λυπεῖ μ’, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἐμβάδας.
οὔκουν λαβεῖν γ’ αὐτὰς ἐδυνάμην οὐδαμοῦ.

Βλέπυρος

μὰ τὸν Διόνυσον οὐδ’ ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰς ἐμὰς
Λακωνικάς, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἔτυχον χεζητιῶν,
ἐς τὼ κοθόρνω τὼ πόδ’ ἐνθεὶς ἵεμαι,
ἵνα μὴ ‘γχέσαιμ’ ἐς τὴν σισύραν: φανὴ γὰρ ἦν.

Ἀνήρ

τί δῆτ’ ἂν εἴη; μῶν ἐπ’ ἄριστον γυνὴ
κέκληκεν αὐτὴν τῶν φίλων;

Βλέπυρος
γνώμην γ’ ἐμήν.

Ἀνήρ

οὔκουν πονηρά γ’ ἐστὶν ὅ τι κἄμ’ εἰδέναι.
ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν ἰμονιάν τιν’ ἀποπατεῖς, ἐμοὶ δ’
ὥρα βαδίζειν ἐστὶν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν,
ἥνπερ λάβω θοἰμάτιον, ὅπερ ἦν μοι μόνον.

Βλέπυρος

κἄγωγ’, ἐπειδὰν ἀποπατήσω: νῦν δέ μου
ἀχράς τις ἐγκλήσασ’ ἔχει τὰ σιτία.

Ἀνήρ

μῶν ἦν Θρασύβουλος εἶπε τοῖς Λακωνικοῖς;

Βλέπυρος

νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον ἐνέχεται γοῦν μοι σφόδρα.
ἀτὰρ τί δράσω; καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τοῦτό με
μόνον τὸ λυποῦν ἐστιν, ἀλλ’ ὅταν φάγω,

ὅποι βαδιεῖταί μοι τὸ λοιπὸν ἡ κόπρος.
νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὗτος βεβαλάνωκε τὴν θύραν,
ὅστις ποτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ἄνθρωπος ἀχραδούσιος.
τίς ἂν οὖν ἰατρόν μοι μετέλθοι καὶ τίνα;
τίς τῶν κατὰ πρωκτὸν δεινός ἐστι τὴν τέχνην;
ἀλλ᾽ οἶδ᾽, Ἀμύνων. ἀλλ᾽ ἴσως ἀρνήσεται.
Ἀντισθένη τις καλεσάτω πάσῃ τέχνῃ.
οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἕνεκά γε στεναγμάτων
οἶδεν τί πρωκτὸς βούλεται χεζητιῶν.
ὦ πότνι᾽ Εἰλείθυια μή με περιίδῃς
διαρραγέντα μηδὲ βεβαλανωμένον,
ἵνα μὴ γένωμαι σκωραμὶς κωμῳδική.

Χρέμης

οὗτος τί ποιεῖς; οὔτι που χέζεις;

Βλέπυρος
ἐγώ;
οὐ δῆτ᾽ ἔτι γε μὰ τὸν Δί᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἀνίσταμαι.

Χρέμης

τὸ τῆς γυναικὸς δ᾽ ἀμπέχει χιτώνιον;

Βλέπυρος

ἐν τῷ σκότῳ γὰρ τοῦτ᾽ ἔτυχον ἔνδον λαβών.
ἀτὰρ πόθεν ἥκεις ἐτεόν;

Χρέμης
ἐξ ἐκκλησίας.

Βλέπυρος

ἤδη λέλυται γάρ;

Χρέμης
νὴ Δί᾽ ὄρθριον μὲν οὖν.
καὶ δῆτα πολὺν ἡ μίλτος ὦ Ζεῦ φίλτατε

γέλων παρέσχεν, ἣν προσέρραινον κύκλῳ.

Βλέπυρος

τὸ τριώβολον δῆτ᾽ ἔλαβες;

Χρέμης
εἰ γὰρ ὤφελον.
ἀλλ᾽ ὕστερος νῦν ἦλθον, ὥστ᾽ αἰσχύνομαι
μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐδέν᾽ ἄλλον ἢ τὸν θύλακον.

Βλέπυρος

τὸ δ᾽ αἴτιον τί;

Χρέμης
πλεῖστος ἀνθρώπων ὄχλος,
ὅσος οὐδεπώποτ᾽ ἦλθ᾽ ἀθρόος ἐς τὴν πύκνα.
καὶ δῆτα πάντες σκυτοτόμοις ἠκάζομεν
ὁρῶντες αὐτούς. οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ᾽ ὑπερφυῶς
ὡς λευκοπληθὴς ἦν ἰδεῖν ἠκκλησία:
ὥστ᾽ οὐκ ἔλαβον οὔτ᾽ αὐτὸς οὔτ᾽ ἄλλοι συχνοί.

Βλέπυρος

οὐδ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἂν ἐγὼ λάβοιμι νῦν ἐλθών;

Χρέμης
πόθεν;
οὐδ᾽ εἰ μὰ Δία τότ᾽ ἦλθες ὅτε τὸ δεύτερον
ἀλεκτρυὼν ἐφθέγγετ᾽.

Βλέπυρος
οἴμοι δείλαιος.
Ἀντίλοχ᾽ ἀποίμωξόν με τοῦ τριωβόλου
τὸν ζῶντα μᾶλλον. τἀμὰ γὰρ διοίχεται.
ἀτὰρ τί τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ἦν, ὅτι τοσοῦτον χρῆμ᾽ ὄχλου
οὕτως ἐν ὥρᾳ ξυνελέγη;

Χρέμης

τί δ᾽ ἄλλο γ᾽ ἢ
ἔδοξε τοῖς πρυτάνεσι περὶ σωτηρίας
γνώμας καθεῖναι τῆς πόλεως; κᾆτ᾽ εὐθέως
πρῶτος Νεοκλείδης ὁ γλάμων παρείρπυσεν.
κἄπειθ᾽ ὁ δῆμος ἀναβοᾷ πόσον δοκεῖς,
‘οὐ δεινὰ τολμᾶν τουτονὶ δημηγορεῖν,
καὶ ταῦτα περὶ σωτηρίας προκειμένου,
ὃς αὐτὸς αὑτῷ βλεφαρίδ᾽ οὐκ ἐσώσατο;’
ὁ δ᾽ ἀναβοήσας καὶ περιβλέψας ἔφη,
‘τί δαί με χρῆν δρᾶν;’

Βλέπυρος

‘σκόροδ᾽ ὁμοῦ τρίψαντ᾽ ὀπῷ
τιθύμαλλον ἐμβαλόντα τοῦ Λακωνικοῦ
σαυτοῦ παραλείφειν τὰ βλέφαρα τῆς ἑσπέρας,’
ἔγωγ᾽ ἂν εἶπον, εἰ παρὼν ἐτύγχανον.

Χρέμης

μετὰ τοῦτον Εὐαίων ὁ δεξιώτατος
παρῆλθε γυμνός, ὡς ἐδόκει τοῖς πλείοσιν:
αὐτός γε μέντοὔφασκεν ἱμάτιον ἔχειν:
κἄπειτ᾽ ἔλεξε δημοτικωτάτους λόγους:
‘ὁρᾶτε μέν με δεόμενον σωτηρίας
τετραστατήρου καὐτόν: ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως ἐρῶ
ὡς τὴν πόλιν καὶ τοὺς πολίτας σώσετε.
ἢν γὰρ παρέχωσι τοῖς δεομένοις οἱ κναφῆς
χλαίνας, ἐπειδὰν πρῶτον ἥλιος τραπῇ,
πλευρῖτις ἡμῶν οὐδέν᾽ ἂν λάβοι ποτέ.
ὅσοις δὲ κλίνη μή ‘στι μηδὲ στρώματα,
ἰέναι καθευδήσοντας ἀπονενιμμένους
ἐς τῶν σκυλοδεψῶν: ἢν δ᾽ ἀποκλῄῃ θύρᾳ
χειμῶνος ὄντος, τρεῖς σισύρας ὀφειλέτω.’

Βλέπυρος

νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον χρηστά γ᾽: εἰ δ᾽ ἐκεῖνά γε
προσέθηκεν, οὐδεὶς ἀντεχειροτόνησεν ἄν,
τοὺς ἀλφιταμοιβοὺς τοῖς ἀπόροις τρεῖς χοίνικας

δεῖπνον παρέχειν ἅπασιν ἢ κλάειν μακρά,
ἵνα τοῦτ᾽ ἀπέλαυσαν Ναυσικύδους τἀγαθόν.

Χρέμης

μετὰ τοῦτο τοίνυν εὐπρεπὴς νεανίας
λευκός τις ἀνεπήδησ᾽ ὅμοιος Νικίᾳ
δημηγορήσων, κἀπεχείρησεν λέγειν
ὡς χρὴ παραδοῦναι ταῖς γυναιξὶ τὴν πόλιν.
εἶτ᾽ ἐθορύβησαν κἀνέκραγον ὡς εὖ λέγοι,
τὸ σκυτοτομικὸν πλῆθος, οἱ δ᾽ ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν
ἀνεβορβόρυξαν.

Βλέπυρος
νοῦν γὰρ εἶχον νὴ Δία.

Χρέμης

ἀλλ᾽ ἦσαν ἥττους: ὁ δὲ κατεῖχε τῇ βοῇ,
τὰς μὲν γυναῖκας πόλλ᾽ ἀγαθὰ λέγων, σὲ δὲ
πολλὰ κακά.

Βλέπυρος
καὶ τί εἶπε;

Χρέμης
πρῶτον μέν σ᾽ ἔφη
εἶναι πανοῦργον.

Βλέπυρος
καὶ σέ;

Χρέμης
μή πω τοῦτ᾽ ἔρῃ.
κἄπειτα κλέπτην.

Βλέπυρος
ἐμὲ μόνον;

Χρέμης

καὶ νὴ Δία
καὶ συκοφάντην.

Βλέπυρος
ἐμὲ μόνον;

Χρέμης
καὶ νὴ Δία
ὧνδὶ τὸ πλῆθος.

Βλέπυρος
τίς δὲ τοῦτ᾽ ἄλλως λέγει;

Χορὸς

γυναῖκα δ᾽ εἶναι πρᾶγμ᾽ ἔφη νουβυστικὸν
καὶ χρηματοποιόν: κοὔτε τἀπόρρητ᾽ ἔφη
ἐκ Θεσμοφόροιν ἑκάστοτ᾽ αὐτὰς ἐκφέρειν,
σὲ δὲ κἀμὲ βουλεύοντε τοῦτο δρᾶν ἀεί.

Βλέπυρος

καὶ νὴ τὸν Ἑρμῆν τοῦτό γ᾽ οὐκ ἐψεύσατο.

Χρέμης

ἔπειτα συμβάλλειν πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἔφη
ἱμάτια χρυσί᾽ ἀργύριον ἐκπώματα
μόνας μόναις, οὐ μαρτύρων ἐναντίον,
καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἀποφέρειν πάντα κοὐκ ἀποστερεῖν,
ἡμῶν δὲ τοὺς πολλοὺς ἔφασκε τοῦτο δρᾶν.

Βλέπυρος

νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ μαρτύρων γ᾽ ἐναντίον.

Χρέμης

οὐ συκοφαντεῖν, οὐ διώκειν, οὐδὲ τὸν
δῆμον καταλύειν, ἀλλὰ πολλὰ κἀγαθά,

ἕτερά τε πλεῖστα τὰς γυναῖκας ηὐλόγει.

Βλέπυρος

τί δῆτ᾽ ἔδοξεν;

Χρέμης
ἐπιτρέπειν γε τὴν πόλιν
ταύταις. ἐδόκει γὰρ τοῦτο μόνον ἐν τῇ πόλει
οὔπω γεγενῆσθαι.

Βλέπυρος
καὶ δέδοκται;

Χρέμης
φήμ᾽ ἐγώ.

Βλέπυρος

ἅπαντά τ᾽ αὐταῖς ἐστι προστεταγμένα
ἃ τοῖσιν ἀστοῖς ἔμελεν;

Χρέμης
οὕτω ταῦτ᾽ ἔχει.

Βλέπυρος

οὐδ᾽ ἐς δικαστήριον ἄρ᾽ εἶμ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἡ γυνή;

Χρέμης

οὐδ᾽ ἔτι σὺ θρέψεις οὓς ἔχεις ἀλλ᾽ ἡ γυνή.

Βλέπυρος

οὐδὲ στένειν τὸν ὄρθρον ἔτι πρᾶγμ᾽ ἆρά μοι;

Χρέμης

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ ταῖς γυναιξὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἤδη μέλει:

σὺ δ᾽ ἀστενακτὶ περδόμενος οἴκοι μενεῖς.

Βλέπυρος

ἐκεῖνο δεινὸν τοῖσιν ἡλίκοισι νῷν,
μὴ παραλαβοῦσαι τῆς πόλεως τὰς ἡνίας
ἔπειτ᾽ ἀναγκάζωσι πρὸς βίαν —

Χρέμης
τί δρᾶν;

Βλέπυρος

κινεῖν ἑαυτάς.

Χρέμης
ἦν δὲ μὴ δυνώμεθα;

Βλέπυρος

ἄριστον οὐ δώσουσι.

Χρέμης
σὺ δέ γε νὴ Δία
δρᾶ ταῦθ᾽, ἵν᾽ ἀριστᾷς τε καὶ κινῇς ἅμα.

Βλέπυρος

τὸ πρὸς βίαν δεινότατον.

Χρέμης
ἀλλ᾽ εἰ τῇ πόλει
τοῦτο ξυνοίσει, ταῦτα χρὴ πάντ᾽ ἄνδρα δρᾶν.

Βλέπυρος

λόγος γέ τοί τις ἔστι τῶν γεραιτέρων,
ἀνόηθ᾽ ὅσ᾽ ἂν καὶ μῶρα βουλευσώμεθα,
ἅπαντ᾽ ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ἡμῖν ξυμφέρειν.

Χρέμης

καὶ ξυμφέροι γ᾽ ὦ πότνια Παλλὰς καὶ θεοί.
ἀλλ᾽ εἶμι: σὺ δ᾽ ὑγίαινε.

Βλέπυρος
καὶ σύ γ᾽ ὦ Χρέμης.

Χορὸς

ἔμβα χώρει.
ἆρ᾽ ἔστι τῶν ἀνδρῶν τις ἡμῖν ὅστις ἐπακολουθεῖ;
στρέφου σκόπει,
φύλαττε σαυτὴν ἀσφαλῶς, πολλοὶ γὰρ οἱ πανοῦργοι,
μή πού τις ἐκ τοὔπισθεν ὢν τὸ σχῆμα καταφυλάξῃ. **Χορὸς**

ἀλλ᾽ ὡς μάλιστα τοῖν ποδοῖν ἐπικτυπῶν βάδιζε:
ἡμῖν δ᾽ ἂν αἰσχύνην φέροι
πάσαισι παρὰ τοῖς ἀνδράσιν τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτ᾽ ἐλεγχθέν.
πρὸς ταῦτα συστέλλου σεαυτὴν
καὶ περισκοπουμένη
τἀνθένδε καὶ τἀκεῖσε καὶ
τἀκ δεξιᾶς, μὴ ξυμφορὰ γενήσεται τὸ πρᾶγμα.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐγκονῶμεν: τοῦ τόπου γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐσμεν ἤδη,
ὅθενπερ εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ὡρμώμεθ᾽ ἡνίκ᾽ ᾖμεν:
τὴν δ᾽ οἰκίαν ἔξεσθ᾽ ὁρᾶν, ὅθενπερ ἡ στρατηγὸς
ἔσθ᾽ ἡ τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ εὑροῦσ᾽ ὃ νῦν ἔδοξε τοῖς πολίταις. **Χορὸς**

ὥστ᾽ εἰκὸς ἡμᾶς μὴ βραδύνειν ἔστ᾽ ἐπαναμενούσας
πώγωνας ἐξηρτημένας,
μὴ καὶ τις †ὄψεθ᾽ ἡμᾶς† χἠμῶν ἴσως κατείπῃ.
ἀλλ᾽ εἶα δεῦρ᾽ ἐπὶ σκιᾶς
ἐλθοῦσα πρὸς τὸ τειχίον
παραβλέπουσα θατέρῳ
πάλιν μετασκεύαζε σαυτὴν αὖθις ἅπερ ἦσθα,
καὶ μὴ βράδυν᾽: ὡς τήνδε καὶ δὴ τὴν στρατηγὸν ἡμῶν
χωροῦσαν ἐξ ἐκκλησίας ὁρῶμεν. ἀλλ᾽ ἐπείγου
ἅπασα καὶ μίσει σάκον πρὸς τοῖν γνάθοιν ἔχουσα:
χαῦται γὰρ ἥκουσιν πάλαι τὸ σχῆμα τοῦτ᾽ ἔχουσαι. **Πραξάγορα**

ταυτὶ μὲν ἡμῖν ὦ γυναῖκες εὐτυχῶς
τὰ πράγματ᾽ ἐκβέβηκεν ἀβουλεύσαμεν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα πρίν τιν᾽ ἀνθρώπων ἰδεῖν,
ῥιπτεῖτε χλαίνας, ἐμβὰς ἐκποδὼν ἴτω,
χάλα συναπτοὺς ἡνίας Λακωνικάς,
βακτηρίας ἄφεσθε. καὶ μέντοι σὺ μὲν
ταύτας κατευτρέπιζ᾽, ἐγὼ δὲ βούλομαι
εἴσω παρερπύσασα πρὶν τὸν ἄνδρα με
ἰδεῖν, καταθέσθαι θοἰμάτιον αὐτοῦ πάλιν
ὅθενπερ ἔλαβον τἄλλα θ᾽ ἁξηνεγκάμην.

Χορὸς

κεῖται καὶ δὴ πάνθ᾽ ἅπερ εἶπας, σὸν δ᾽ ἔργον τἄλλα διδάσκειν,
ὅ τί σοι δρῶσαι ξύμφορον ἡμεῖς δόξομεν ὀρθῶς ὑπακούειν.
οὐδεμιᾷ γὰρ δεινοτέρᾳ σου ξυμμείξασ᾽ οἶδα γυναικί.

Πραξάγορα

περιμείνατέ νυν, ἵνα τῆς ἀρχῆς ἣν ἄρτι κεχιεροτόνημαι,
ξυμβούλοισιν πάσαις ὑμῖν χρήσωμαι. καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖ μοι
ἐν τῷ θορύβῳ καὶ τοῖς δεινοῖς ἀνδρειόταται γεγένησθε.

Βλέπυρος

αὕτη πόθεν ἥκεις Πραξαγόρα;

Πραξάγορα
τί δ᾽ ὦ μέλε
σοὶ τοῦθ᾽;

Βλέπυρος
ὅ τί μοι τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν; ὡς εὐηθικῶς.

Πραξάγορα

οὗτοι παρὰ τοῦ μοιχοῦ γε φήσεις.

Βλέπυρος
οὐκ ἴσως

ἑνός γε.

Πραξάγορα
καὶ μὴν βασανίσαι τουτί γέ σοι
ἔξεστι.

Βλέπυρος
πῶς;

Πραξάγορα
εἰ τῆς κεφαλῆς ὄζω μύρου.

Βλέπυρος

τί δ᾽; οὐχὶ βινεῖται γυνὴ κἄνευ μύρου;

Πραξάγορα

οὐ δῆτα τάλαν ἔγωγε.

Βλέπυρος
πῶς οὖν ὄρθριον
ᾤχου σιωπῇ θοἰμάτιον λαβοῦσά μου;

Πραξάγορα

γυνή μέ τις νύκτωρ ἑταίρα καὶ φίλη
μετεπέμψατ᾽ ὠδίνουσα.

Βλέπυρος
κᾆτ᾽ οὐκ ἦν ἐμοὶ
φράσασαν ἰέναι;

Πραξάγορα
τῆς λεχοῦς δ᾽ οὐ φροντίσαι
οὕτως ἐχούσης ὦνερ;

Βλέπυρος
εἰποῦσάν γέ μοι.
ἀλλ᾽ ἔστιν ἐνταῦθά τι κακόν.

Πραξάγορα
μὰ τὼ θεὼ
ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ εἶχον ᾠχόμην: ἐδεῖτο δὲ
ἥπερ μεθῆκέ μ᾽ ἐξιέναι πάσῃ τέχνῃ.

Βλέπυρος

εἶτ᾽ οὐ τὸ σαυτῆς ἱμάτιον ἐχρῆν σ᾽ ἔχειν;
ἀλλ᾽ ἔμ᾽ ἀποδύσασ᾽ ἐπιβαλοῦσα τοὔγκυκλον
ᾤχου καταλιποῦσ᾽ ὡσπερεὶ προκείμενον,
μόνον οὐ στεφανώσασ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἐπιθεῖσα λήκυθον.

Πραξάγορα

ψῦχος γὰρ ἦν, ἐγὼ δὲ λεπτὴ κἀσθενής:
ἔπειθ᾽ ἵν᾽ ἀλεαίνοιμι, τοῦτ᾽ ἠμπεσχόμην:
σὲ δ᾽ ἐν ἀλέᾳ κατακείμενον καὶ στρώμασιν
κατέλιπον ὦνερ.

Βλέπυρος
αἱ δὲ δὴ Λακωνικαὶ
ᾤχοντο μετὰ σοῦ κατὰ τί χὴ βακτηρία;

Πραξάγορα

ἵνα θοἰμάτιον σώσαιμι, μεθυπεδησάμην
μιμουμένη σε καὶ κτυποῦσα τοῖν ποδοῖν
καὶ τοὺς λίθους παίουσα τῇ βακτηρίᾳ.

Βλέπυρος

οἶσθ᾽ οὖν ἀπολωλεκυῖα πυρῶν ἑκτέα,
ὃν χρῆν ἔμ᾽ ἐξ ἐκκλησίας εἰληφέναι;

Πραξάγορα

μὴ φροντίσῃς: ἄρρεν γὰρ ἔτεκε παιδίον.

Βλέπυρος

ἠκκλησία;

Πραξάγορα
μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ἣν ἐγὼχόμην.
ἀτὰρ γεγένηται;

Βλέπυρος

ναὶ μὰ Δί᾽. οὐκ ᾔδησθά με
φράσαντά σοι χθές;

Πραξάγορα
ἄρτι γ᾽ ἀναμιμνήσκομαι.

Βλέπυρος

οὐδ᾽ ἄρα τὰ δόξαντ᾽ οἶσθα;

Πραξάγορα
μὰ Δί ἐγὼ μὲν οὔ.

Βλέπυρος

κάθησο τοίνυν σηπίας μασωμένη.
ὑμῖν δέ φασι παραδεδόσθαι τὴν πόλιν.

Πραξάγορα

τί δρᾶν; ὑφαίνειν;

Βλέπυρος
οὐ μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἄρχειν.

Πραξάγορα
τίνων;

Βλέπυρος

ἁπαξαπάντων τῶν κατὰ πόλιν πραγμάτων.

Πραξάγορα

νὴ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην μακαρία γ᾽ ἄρ ἡ πόλις
ἔσται τὸ λοιπόν.

Βλέπυρος
κατὰ τί;

Πραξάγορα
πολλῶν οὕνεκα.
οὐ γὰρ ἔτι τοῖς τολμῶσιν αὐτὴν αἰσχρὰ δρᾶν
ἔσται τὸ λοιπόν, οὐδαμοῦ δὲ μαρτυρεῖν,
οὐ συκοφαντεῖν —

Βλέπυρος
μηδαμῶς πρὸς τῶν θεῶν
τουτὶ ποιήσῃς μηδ᾽ ἀφέλῃ μου τὸν βίον.

Ἀνήρ

ὦ δαιμόνι᾽ ἀνδρῶν τὴν γυναῖκ᾽ ἔα λέγειν.

Πραξάγορα

μὴ λωποδυτῆσαι, μὴ φθονεῖν τοῖς πλησίον,
μὴ γυμνὸν εἶναι μὴ πένητα μηδένα,
μὴ λοιδορεῖσθαι, μὴ ‘νεχυραζόμενον φέρειν.

Ἀνήρ

νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ μεγάλα γ᾽, εἰ μὴ ψεύσεται.

Πραξάγορα

ἀλλ᾽ ἀποφανῶ τοῦθ᾽, ὥστε σέ τέ μοι μαρτυρεῖν
καὶ τοῦτον αὐτὸν μηδὲν ἀντειπεῖν ἐμοι.

Χορὸς

νῦν δὴ δεῖ σε πυκνὴν φρένα καὶ φιλόσοφον ἐγείρειν

φροντίδ᾽ ἐπισταμένην
ταῖσι φίλαισιν ἀμύνειν.
καινὴ γὰρ ἐπ᾽ εὐτυχίαισιν
ἔρχεται γλώττης ἐπίνοια πολίτην
575 δῆμον ἐπαγλαϊοῦσα
μυρίαισιν ὠφελίαισι βίου: δηλοῦν δ᾽ ὅ τί περ δύνασαι
καιρός.
δεῖται γάρ τοι σοφοῦ τινος ἐξευρήματος ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν.
ἀλλὰ πέραινε μόνον
μήτε δεδραμένα μήτ᾽ εἰρημένα πω πρότερον:
580 μισοῦσι γὰρ ἤν τὰ παλαιὰ πολλάκις θεῶνται. **Χορὸς**

ἀλλ᾽ οὐ μέλλειν, ἀλλ᾽ ἅπτεσθαι καὶ δὴ χρῆν ταῖς διανοίαις,
ὡς τὸ ταχύνειν χαρίτων μετέχει πλεῖστον παρὰ τοῖσι θεαταῖς. **Πραξάγορα**

καὶ μὴν ὅτι μὲν χρηστὰ διδάξω πιστεύω: τοὺς δὲ θεατάς,
εἰ καινοτομεῖν ἐθελήσουσιν καὶ μὴ τοῖς ἠθάσι λίαν
585 τοῖς τ᾽ ἀρχαίοις ἐνδιατρίβειν, τοῦτ᾽ ἔσθ᾽ ὃ μάλιστα δέδοικα.

Βλέπυρος

περὶ μὲν τοίνυν τοῦ καινοτομεῖν μὴ δείσῃς: τοῦτο γὰρ ἡμῖν
δρᾶν ἀντ᾽ ἄλλης ἀρχῆς ἐστιν, τῶν δ᾽ ἀρχαίων ἀμελῆσαι.

Πραξάγορα

μή νυν πρότερον μηδεὶς ὑμῶν ἀντείπῃ μηδ᾽ ὑποκρούσῃ,
πρὶν ἐπίστασθαι τὴν ἐπίνοιαν καὶ τοῦ φράζοντος ἀκοῦσαι.
590 κοινωνεῖν γὰρ πάντας φήσω χρῆναι πάντων μετέχοντας
κἀκ ταὐτοῦ ζῆν, καὶ μὴ τὸν μὲν πλουτεῖν, τὸν δ᾽ ἄθλιον εἶναι,
μηδὲ γεωργεῖν τὸν μὲν πολλήν, τῷ δ᾽ εἶναι μηδὲ ταφῆναι,
μηδ᾽ ἀνδραπόδοις τὸν μὲν χρῆσθαι πολλοῖς, τὸν δ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἀκολούθῳ:
ἀλλ᾽ ἕνα ποιῶ κοινὸν πᾶσιν βίοτον καὶ τοῦτον ὅμοιον.

Βλέπυρος

595 πῶς οὖν ἔσται κοινὸς ἅπασιν;

Πραξάγορα
κατέδει πέλεθον πρότερός μου.

Βλέπυρος

καὶ τῶν πελέθων κοινωνοῦμεν;

Πραξάγορα
μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἔφθης μ᾽ ὑποκρούσας.
τοῦτο γὰρ ἤμελλον ἐγὼ λέξειν: τὴν γῆν πρώτιστα ποιήσω
κοινὴν πάντων καὶ τἀργύριον καὶ τἄλλ᾽ ὁπόσ᾽ ἐστὶν ἑκάστῳ.
εἶτ᾽ ἀπὸ τούτων κοινῶν ὄντων ἡμεῖς βοσκήσομεν ὑμᾶς
ταμιευόμεναι καὶ φειδόμεναι καὶ τὴν γνώμην προσέχουσαι.

Βλέπυρος

πῶς οὖν ὅστις μὴ κέκτηται γῆν ἡμῶν, ἀργύριον δὲ
καὶ Δαρεικοὺς ἀφανῆ πλοῦτον;

Πραξάγορα
τοῦτ᾽ ἐς τὸ μέσον καταθήσει.
καὶ μὴ καταθεὶς ψευδορκήσει.

Βλέπυρος
κἀκτήσατο γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο.

Πραξάγορα

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδέν τοι χρήσιμον ἔσται πάντως αὐτῷ.

Βλέπυρος
κατὰ δὴ τί;

Πραξάγορα

οὐδεὶς οὐδὲν πενίᾳ δράσει: πάντα γὰρ ἕξουσιν ἅπαντες,
ἄρτους τεμάχη μάζας χλαίνας οἶνον στεφάνους ἐρεβίνθους.
ὥστε τί κέρδος μὴ καταθεῖναι; σὺ γὰρ ἐξευρὼν ἀπόδειξον.

Βλέπυρος

οὔκουν καὶ νῦν οὗτοι μᾶλλον κλέπτουσ᾽ οἷς ταῦτα πάρεστιν;

Πραξάγορα

πρότερόν γ᾽ ὦταῖρ᾽ ὅτε τοῖσι νόμοις διεχρώμεθα τοῖς προτέροισιν:
νῦν δ᾽ ἔσται γὰρ βίος ἐκ κοινοῦ, τί τὸ κέρδος μὴ καταθεῖναι;

Βλέπυρος

ἢν μείρακ᾽ ἰδὼν ἐπιθυμήσῃ καὶ βούληται σκαλαθῦραι,
ἕξει τούτων ἀφελὼν δοῦναι, τῶν ἐκ κοινοῦ δὲ μεθέξει
ξυγκαταδαρθών.

Πραξάγορα
ἀλλ᾽ ἐξέσται προῖκ᾽ αὐτῷ ξυγκαταδαρθεῖν.
καὶ ταύτας γὰρ κοινὰς ποιῶ τοῖς ἀνδράσι συγκατακεῖσθαι
καὶ παιδοποιεῖν τῷ βουλομένῳ.

Βλέπυρος
πῶς οὖν οὐ πάντες ἴασιν
ἐπὶ τὴν ὡραιοτάτην αὐτῶν καὶ ζητήσουσιν ἐρείδειν;

Πραξάγορα

αἱ φαυλότεραι καὶ σιμότεραι παρὰ τὰς σεμνὰς καθεδοῦνται:
κᾆτ᾽ ἢν ταύτης ἐπιθυμήσῃ, τὴν αἰσχρὰν πρῶθ᾽ ὑποκρούσει.

Βλέπυρος

καὶ πῶς ἡμᾶς τοὺς πρεσβύτας, ἢν ταῖς αἰσχραῖσι συνῶμεν,
οὐκ ἐπιλείψει τὸ πέος πρότερον πρὶν ἐκεῖσ᾽ οἶ φῂς ἀφικέσθαι;

Πραξάγορα

οὐχὶ μαχοῦνται: περὶ σοῦ θάρρει: μὴ δείσῃς: οὐχὶ μαχοῦνται.

Βλέπυρος

περὶ τοῦ;

Πραξάγορα
τοῦ μὴ ξυγκαταδαρθεῖν. καὶ σοὶ τοιοῦτον ὑπάρχει.

Βλέπυρος

τὸ μὲν ὑμέτερον γνώμην τιν᾽ ἔχει: προβεβούλευται γάρ, ὅπως ἂν
μηδεμιᾶς ᾖ τρύπημα κενόν: τὸ δὲ τῶν ἀνδρῶν τί ποιήσει;
φεύξονται γὰρ τοὺς αἰσχίους, ἐπὶ τοὺς δὲ καλοὺς βαδιοῦνται.

Πραξάγορα

ἀλλὰ φυλάξουσ᾽ οἱ φαυλότεροι τοὺς καλλίους ἀπιόντας
ἀπὸ τοῦ δείπνου καὶ τηρήσουσ᾽ ἐπὶ τοῖσιν δημοσίοισιν:
κοὐκ ἐξέσται παρὰ τοῖσι καλοῖς καὶ τοῖς μεγάλοις καταδαρθεῖν
ταῖσι γυναιξὶ πρὶν ἂν τοῖς αἰσχροῖς καὶ τοῖς μικροῖς χαρίσωνται.

Βλέπυρος

ἡ Λυσικράτους ἄρα νυνὶ ῥὶς ἴσα τοῖσι καλοῖσι φρονήσει.

Πραξάγορα

νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω καὶ δημοτική γ᾽ ἡ γνώμη καὶ καταχήνη
τῶν σεμνοτέρων ἔσται πολλὴ καὶ τῶν σφραγῖδας ἐχόντων,
ὅταν ἐμβάδ᾽ ἔχων εἴπῃ πρότερος, ‘παραχώρει κᾆτ᾽ ἐπιτήρει,
ὅταν ἤδη ‘γὼ διαπραξάμενος παραδῶ σοι δευτεριάζειν.’

Βλέπυρος

πῶς οὖν οὕτω ζώντων ἡμῶν τοὺς αὐτοῦ παῖδας ἕκαστος
ἔσται δυνατὸς διαγιγνώσκειν;

Πραξάγορα
τί δὲ δεῖ; πατέρας γὰρ ἅπαντας
τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους αὐτῶν εἶναι τοῖσι χρόνοισιν νομιοῦσιν.

Βλέπυρος

οὐκοῦν ἄγξουσ᾽ εὖ καὶ χρηστῶς ἐξῆς τὸν πάντα γέροντα
διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν, ἐπεὶ καὶ νῦν γιγνώσκοντες πατέρ᾽ ὄντα
ἄγχουσι. τί δῆθ᾽ ὅταν ἀγνὼς ᾖ; πῶς οὐ τότε κἀπιχεσοῦνται;

Πραξάγορα

ἀλλ᾽ ὁ παρεστὼς οὐκ ἐπιτρέψει: τότε δ᾽ αὐτοῖς οὐκ ἔμελ᾽ οὐδὲν
τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ὅστις τύπτοι: νῦν δ᾽ ἢν πληγέντος ἀκούσῃ,
μὴ αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον τύπτῃ δεδιὼς τοῖς δρῶσιν τοῦτο μαχεῖται.

Βλέπυρος

τὰ μὲν ἄλλα λέγεις οὐδὲν σκαιῶς: εἰ δὲ προσελθὼν Ἐπίκουρος
ἢ Λευκολόφας πάππαν με καλεῖ, τοῦτ᾽ ἤδη δεινὸν ἀκοῦσαι.

Πραξάγορα

πολὺ μέντοι δεινότερον τούτου τοῦ πράγματός ἐστι,

Βλέπυρος
τὸ ποῖον;

Πραξάγορα

εἴ σε φιλήσειεν Ἀρίστυλλος φάσκων αὐτοῦ πατέρ᾽ εἶναι.

Βλέπυρος

οἰμώζοι γ᾽ ἂν καὶ κωκύοι.

Πραξάγορα
σὺ δέ γ᾽ ὄζοις ἂν καλαμίνθης,
ἀλλ᾽ οὗτος μὲν πρότερον γέγονεν πρὶν τὸ ψήφισμα γενέσθαι,
ὥστ᾽ οὐχὶ δέος μή σε φιλήσῃ.

Βλέπυρος
δεινὸν μέντἂν ἐπεπόνθη.
τὴν γῆν δὲ τίς ἔσθ᾽ ὁ γεωργήσων;

Πραξάγορα
οἱ δοῦλοι. σοὶ δὲ μελήσει,
ὅταν ᾖ δεκάπουν τὸ στοιχεῖον, λιπαρὸν χωρεῖν ἐπὶ δεῖπνον.

Βλέπυρος

περὶ δ᾽ ἱματίων τίς πόρος ἔσται; καὶ γὰρ τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν ἐρέσθαι.

Πραξάγορα

τὰ μὲν ὄνθ᾽ ὑμῖν πρῶτον ὑπάρξει, τὰ δὲ λοίφ᾽ ἡμεῖς ὑφανοῦμεν.

Βλέπυρος

ἐν ἔτι ζητῶ: πῶς ἦν τις ὄφλῃ παρὰ τοῖς ἄρχουσι δίκην τῳ,
πόθεν ἐκτείσει ταύτην; οὐ γὰρ τῶν κοινῶν γ᾽ ἐστὶ δίκαιον.

Πραξάγορα

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ δίκαι πρῶτον ἔσονται.

Βλέπυρος
τουτὶ τοὔπος σ᾽ ἐπιτρίψει.

Πραξάγορα

κἀγὼ ταύτην γνώμην ἐθέμην: τοῦ γὰρ τάλαν οὕνεκ᾽ ἔσονται;

Βλέπυρος

πολλῶν οὕνεκα νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω: πρῶτον δ᾽ ἑνὸς οὕνεκα δήπου,
ἦν τις ὀφείλων ἐξαρνῆται.

Πραξάγορα
πόθεν οὖν ἐδάνεισ᾽ ὁ δανείσας
ἐν τῷ κοινῷ πάντων ὄντων; κλέπτων δήπου᾽ στ᾽ ἐπίδηλος.

Βλέπυρος

νὴ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽ εὖ γε διδάσκεις. τουτὶ τοίνυν φρασάτω μοι,
τῆς αἰκείας οἱ τύπτοντες πόθεν ἐκτείσουσιν, ἐπειδὰν
εὐωχηθέντες ὑβρίζωσιν; τοῦτο γὰρ οἶμαί σ᾽ ἀπορήσειν.

Πραξάγορα

ἀπὸ τῆς μάζης ἧς σιτεῖται: ταύτης γὰρ ὅταν τις ἀφαιρῇ,
οὐχ ὑβριεῖται φαύλως οὕτως αὖθις τῇ γαστρὶ κολασθείς.

Βλέπυρος

οὐδ᾽ αὖ κλέπτης οὐδεὶς ἔσται;

Πραξάγορα
πῶς γὰρ κλέψει μετὸν αὐτῷ;

Βλέπυρος

οὐδ᾽ ἀποδύσουσ᾽ ἄρα τῶν νυκτῶν;

Πραξάγορα
οὐκ ἦν οἴκοι γε καθεύδῃς,
οὐδ᾽ ἦν γε θύραζ᾽ ὥσπερ πρότερον: βίοτος γὰρ πᾶσιν ὑπάρξει.
ἦν δ᾽ ἀποδύῃ γ᾽, αὐτὸς δώσει. τί γὰρ αὐτῷ πρᾶγμα μάχεσθαι;
ἕτερον γὰρ ἰὼν ἐκ τοῦ κοινοῦ κρεῖττον ἐκείνου κομιεῖται.

Βλέπυρος

οὐδὲ κυβεύσουσ᾽ ἦρ᾽ ἄνθρωποι;

Πραξάγορα
περὶ τοῦ γὰρ τοῦτο ποιήσει;

Βλέπυρος

τὴν δὲ δίαιταν τίνα ποιήσεις;

Πραξάγορα
κοινὴν πᾶσιν. τὸ γὰρ ἄστυ
μίαν οἴκησίν φημι ποιήσειν συρρήξασ᾽ εἰς ἓν ἅπαντα,
ὥστε βαδίζειν ὡς ἀλλήλους.

Βλέπυρος
τὸ δὲ δεῖπνον ποῦ παραθήσεις;

Πραξάγορα

τὰ δικαστήρια καὶ τὰς στοιὰς ἀνδρῶνας πάντα ποιήσω.

Βλέπυρος

τὸ δὲ βῆμα τί σοι χρήσιμον ἔσται;

Πραξάγορα
τοὺς κρατῆρας καταθήσω
καὶ τὰς ὑδρίας, καὶ ῥαψῳδεῖν ἔσται τοῖς παιδαρίοισιν
τοὺς ἀνδρείους ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ, κεἴ τις δειλὸς γεγένηται,
ἵνα μὴ δειπνῶσ᾽ αἰσχυνόμενοι.

Βλέπυρος
νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω χάριέν γε.
τὰ δὲ κληρωτήρια ποῖ τρέψεις;

Πραξάγορα
εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν καταθήσω:
κᾆτα στήσασα παρ᾽ Ἁρμοδίῳ κληρώσω πάντας, ἕως ἂν
εἰδῶς ὁ λαχὼν ἀπίῃ χαίρων ἐν ὁποίῳ γράμματι δειπνεῖ:
και κηρύξει τοὺς ἐκ τοῦ βῆτ᾽ ἐπὶ τὴν στοιὰν ἀκολουθεῖν
τὴν βασίλειον δειπνήσοντας: τὸ δὲ θῆτ᾽ ἐς τὴν παρὰ ταύτην,
τοὺς δ᾽ ἐκ τοῦ κάππ᾽ ἐς τὴν στοιὰν χωρεῖν τὴν ἀλφιτόπωλιν.

Βλέπυρος

ἵνα κάπτωσιν;

Πραξάγορα
μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἵν᾽ ἐκεῖ δειπνῶσιν.

Βλέπυρος
ὅτῳ δὲ τὸ γράμμα
μὴ ‘ξελκυσθῇ καθ᾽ ὃ δειπνήσει, τούτους ἀπελῶσιν ἅπαντες.

Πραξάγορα

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔσται τοῦτο παρ᾽ ἡμῖν:
πᾶσι γὰρ ἄφθονα πάντα παρέξομεν,
ὥστε μεθυσθεὶς αὐτῷ στεφάνῳ
πᾶς τις ἅπεισιν τὴν δᾷδα λαβών.
αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες κατὰ τὰς διόδους

προσπίπτουσαι τοῖς ἀπὸ δείπνου
τάδε λέξουσιν: ‘δεῦρο παρ᾽ ἡμᾶς:
ἐνθάδε μεῖράξ ἐσθ᾽ ὡραία.’
‘παρ᾽ ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ἑτέρα’
φήσει τις ἄνωθ᾽ ἐξ ὑπερῴου,
‘καὶ καλλίστη καὶ λευκοτάτη:
πρότερον μέντοι δεῖ σε καθεύδειν
αὐτῆς παρ᾽ ἐμοί.’
τοῖς εὐπρεπέσιν δ᾽ ἀκολουθοῦντες
καὶ μειρακίοις οἱ φαυλότεροι
τοιάδ᾽ ἐροῦσιν: ‘ποῖ θεῖς οὗτος;
πάντως οὐδὲν δράσεις ἐλθών:
τοῖς γὰρ σιμοῖς καὶ τοῖς αἰσχροῖς
ἐψήφισται προτέροις βινεῖν,
ὑμᾶς δὲ τέως θρῖα λαβόντας
διφόρου συκῆς
ἐν τοῖς προθύροισι δέφεσθαι.’

Πραξάγορα

φέρε νυν φράσον μοι, ταῦτ᾽ ἀρέσκει σφῷν;

Βλέπυρος
πάνυ.

Πραξάγορα

βαδιστέον τἄρ᾽ ἐστὶν εἰς ἀγορὰν ἐμοί,
ἵν᾽ ἀποδέχωμαι τὰ προσιόντα χρήματα,
λαβοῦσα κηρύκαιναν εὔφωνόν τινα.
ἐμὲ γὰρ ἀνάγκη ταῦτα δρᾶν ἠρημένην
ἄρχειν, καταστῆσαί τε τὰ ξυσσίτια,
ὅπως ἂν εὐωχῆσθε πρῶτον τήμερον.

Βλέπυρος

ἤδη γὰρ εὐωχησόμεσθα;

Πραξάγορα

φήμ᾽ ἐγώ.
ἔπειτα τὰς πόρνας καταπαῦσαι βούλομαι
ἀπαξαπάσας.

Βλέπυρος
ἵνα τί;

Πραξάγορα
δῆλον τουτογί:
ἵνα τῶν νέων ἔχωσιν αὗται τὰς ἀκμάς.
καὶ τάς γε δούλας οὐχὶ δεῖ κοσμουμένας
τὴν τῶν ἐλευθέρων ὑφαρπάζειν Κύπριν,
ἀλλὰ παρὰ τοῖς δούλοισι κοιμᾶσθαι μόνον
κατωνάκην τὸν χοῖρον ἀποτετιλμένας.

Βλέπυρος

φέρε νυν ἐγώ σοι παρακολουθῶ πλησίον,
ἵν᾽ ἀποβλέπωμαι καὶ λέγωσί μοι ταδί,
τὸν τῆς στρατηγοῦ τοῦτον οὐ θαυμάζετε;

Ἀνὴρ Α

ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἵν᾽ εἰς ἀγοράν γε τὰ σκεύη φέρω,
προχειριοῦμαι κἀξετάσω τὴν οὐσίαν.

Χοροῦ

Ἀνὴρ Α

χώρει σὺ δεῦρο κιναχύρα καλὴ καλῶς
τῶν χρημάτων θύραζε πρώτη τῶν ἐμῶν,
ὅπως ἂν ἐντετριμμένη κανηφορῇς,
πολλοὺς κάτω δὴ θυλάκους στρέψασ᾽ ἐμούς.
ποῦ᾽ σθ᾽ ἡ διφροφόρος; ἡ χύτρα δεῦρ᾽ ἔξιθι,
νὴ Δία μέλαινά γ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ἂν εἰ τὸ φάρμακον
ἔψουσ᾽ ἔτυχες ᾧ Λυσικράτης μελαίνεται.
ἵστω παρ᾽ αὐτήν, δεῦρ᾽ ἴθ᾽, ἡ κομμώτρια.
φέρε δεῦρο ταύτην τὴν ὑδρίαν ὑδριαφόρε
ἐνταῦθα. σὺ δὲ δεῦρ᾽ ἡ κιθαρῳδὸς ἔξιθι,

πολλάκις ἀναστήσασά μ᾽ εἰς ἐκκλησίαν
ἀωρὶ νυκτῶν διὰ τὸν ὄρθριον νόμον.
ὁ τὴν σκάφην λαβὼν προΐτω: τὰ κηρία
κόμιζε, τοὺς θαλλοὺς καθίστη πλησίον,
καὶ τῶ τρίποδ᾽ ἐξένεγκε καὶ τὴν λήκυθον.
τὰ χυτρίδι᾽ ἤδη καὶ τὸν ὄχλον ἀφίετε.

Ἀνὴρ Β

ἐγὼ καταθήσω τἀμά; κακοδαίμων ἄρα
ἀνὴρ ἔσομαι καὶ νοῦν ὀλίγον κεκτημένος.
μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ γ᾽ οὐδέποτ᾽, ἀλλὰ βασανιῶ
πρώτιστον αὐτὰ πολλάκις καὶ σκέψομαι.
οὐ γὰρ τὸν ἐμὸν ἱδρῶτα καὶ φειδωλίαν
οὐδὲν πρὸς ἔπος οὕτως ἀνοήτως ἐκβαλῶ,
πρὶν ἂν ἐκπύθωμαι πᾶν τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ὅπως ἔχει.
οὗτος τί τὰ σκευάρια ταυτὶ βούλεται;
πότερον μετοικιζόμενος ἐξενήνοχας
αὖτ᾽ ἢ φέρεις ἐνέχυρα θήσων;

Ἀνὴρ Α
οὐδαμῶς.

Ἀνὴρ Β

τί δῆτ᾽ ἐπὶ στοίχου ‘στὶν οὕτως; οὔτι μὴ
Ἱέρωνι τῷ κήρυκι πομπὴν πέμπετε;

Ἀνὴρ Α

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἀποφέρειν αὐτὰ μέλλω τῇ πόλει
ἐς τὴν ἀγορὰν κατὰ τοὺς δεδογμένους νόμους.

Ἀνὴρ Β

μέλλεις ἀποφέρειν;

Ἀνὴρ Α
πάνυ γε.

Ἀνὴρ Β
κακοδαίμων ἄρ᾽ εἶ
νὴ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτῆρα.

Ἀνὴρ Α
πῶς;

Ἀνὴρ Β
πῶς; ῥᾳδίως.

Ἀνὴρ Α

τί δ᾽; οὐχὶ πειθαρχεῖν με τοῖς νόμοισι δεῖ;

Ἀνὴρ Β

ποίοισιν ᾧ δύστηνε;

Ἀνὴρ Α
τοῖς δεδογμένοις.

Ἀνὴρ Β

δεδογμένοισιν; ὡς ἀνόητος ἦσθ᾽ ἄρα.

Ἀνὴρ Α

765 ἀνόητος;

Ἀνὴρ Β
οὐ γάρ; ἠλιθιώτατος μὲν οὖν
ἁπαξαπάντων.

Ἀνὴρ Α
ὅτι τὸ ταττόμενον ποιῶ;

Ἀνὴρ Β

τὸ ταττόμενον γὰρ δεῖ ποιεῖν τὸν σώφρονα;

Ἀνὴρ Α

μάλιστα πάντων.

Ἀνὴρ Β
τὸν μὲν οὖν ἀβέλτερον.

Ἀνὴρ Α

σὺ δ᾽ οὐ καταθεῖναι διανοεῖ;

Ἀνὴρ Β
φυλάξομαι,
πρὶν ἄν γ᾽ ἴδω τὸ πλῆθος ὅ τι βουλεύεται.

Ἀνὴρ Α

τί γὰρ ἄλλο γ᾽ ἢ φέρειν παρεσκευασμένοι
τὰ χρήματ᾽ εἰσίν;

Ἀνὴρ Β
ἀλλ᾽ ἰδὼν ἐπειθόμην.

Ἀνὴρ Α

λέγουσι γοῦν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς.

Ἀνὴρ Β
λέξουσι γάρ.

Ἀνὴρ Α

καί φασιν οἴσειν ἀράμενοι.

Ἀνὴρ Β
φήσουσι γάρ.

Ἀνὴρ Α

ἀπολεῖς ἀπιστῶν πάντ᾽.

Ἀνὴρ Β
ἀπιστήσουσι γάρ.

Ἀνὴρ Α

ὁ Ζεύς σέ γ᾽ ἐπιτρίψειεν.

Ἀνὴρ Β
ἐπιτρίψουσι γάρ.
οἴσειν δοκεῖς τιν᾽ ὅστις αὐτῶν νοῦν ἔχει;
οὐ γὰρ πάτριον τοῦτ᾽ ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ λαμβάνειν
ἡμᾶς μόνον δεῖ νὴ Δία: καὶ γὰρ οἱ θεοί:
780 γνώσει δ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶν χειρῶν γε τῶν ἀγαλμάτων:
ὅταν γὰρ εὐχώμεσθα διδόναι τἀγαθά,
ἕστηκεν ἐκτείνοντα τὴν χεῖρ᾽ ὑπτίαν
οὐχ ὥς τι δώσοντ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ὅπως τι λήψεται.

Ἀνὴρ Α

ὦ δαιμόνι᾽ ἀνδρῶν ἔα με τῶν προὔργου τι δρᾶν.
785 ταυτὶ γάρ ἐστι συνδετέα. ποῦ μοὔσθ᾽ ἱμάς;

Ἀνὴρ Β

ὄντως γὰρ οἴσεις;

Ἀνὴρ Α
ναὶ μὰ Δία, καὶ δὴ μὲν οὖν
τωδὶ ξυνάπτω τὼ τρίποδε.

Ἀνὴρ Β
τῆς μωρίας,
τὸ μηδὲ περιμείναντα τοὺς ἄλλους ὅ τι
δράσουσιν εἶτα τηνικαῦτ᾽ ἤδη —

Ἀνὴρ Α
τί δρᾶν;

Ἀνὴρ Β

ἐπαναμένειν, ἔπειτα διατρίβειν ἔτι.

Ἀνὴρ Α

ἵνα δὴ τί;

Ἀνὴρ Β
σεισμὸς εἰ γένοιτο πολλάκις
ἢ πῦρ ἀπότροπον, ἢ διᾴξειεν γαλῆ,
παύσαιντ᾽ ἂν ἐσφέροντες ὦμβρόντητε σύ.

Ἀνὴρ Α

χαρίεντα γοῦν πάθοιμ᾽ ἄν, εἰ μὴ ‘χοιμ᾽ ὅποι
ταῦτα καταθείμην.

Ἀνὴρ Β
μὴ γὰρ οὐ λάβῃς ὅποι:
θάρρει, καταθήσεις, κἂν ἔνης ἔλθῃς.

Ἀνὴρ Α
τιή;

Ἀνὴρ Β

ἐγῷδα τούτους χειροτονοῦντας μὲν ταχύ,
ἅττ᾽ ἂν δὲ δόξῃ ταῦτα πάλιν ἀρνουμένους.

Ἀνὴρ Α

οἴσουσιν ὦ τᾶν.

Ἀνὴρ Β
ἢν δὲ μὴ κομίσωσι, τί;

Ἀνὴρ Α

ἀμέλει κομιοῦσιν.

Ἀνὴρ Β

ἢν δὲ μὴ κομίσωσι, τί;

Ἀνὴρ Α

μαχούμεθ᾽ αὐτοῖς.

Ἀνὴρ Β
ἢν δὲ κρείττους ὦσι, τί;

Ἀνὴρ Α

ἄπειμ᾽ ἐάσας.

Ἀνὴρ Β
ἢν δὲ πωλῶσ᾽ αὐτά, τί;

Ἀνὴρ Α

διαρραγείης.

Ἀνὴρ Β
ἢν διαρραγῶ δέ, τί;

Ἀνὴρ Α

καλῶς ποιήσεις.

Ἀνὴρ Β
σὺ δ᾽ ἐπιθυμήσεις φέρειν;

Ἀνὴρ Α

805 ἔγωγε: καὶ γὰρ τοὺς ἐμαυτοῦ γείτονας
ὁρῶ φέροντας.

Ἀνὴρ Β
πάνυ γ᾽ ἂν οὖν Ἀντισθένης
αὖτ᾽ εἰσενέγκοι: πολὺ γὰρ ἐμμελέστερον
πρότερον χέσαι πλεῖν ἢ τριάκονθ᾽ ἡμέρας.

Ἀνὴρ Α

οἴμωζε.

Ἀνὴρ Β
Καλλίμαχος δ᾽ ὁ χοροδιδάσκαλος
αὐτοῖσιν εἰσοίσει τι;

Ἀνὴρ Α
πλείω Καλλίου.

Ἀνὴρ Β

ἄνθρωπος οὗτος ἀποβαλεῖ τὴν οὐσίαν.

Ἀνὴρ Α

δεινά γε λέγεις.

Ἀνὴρ Β
τί δεινόν; ὥσπερ οὐχ ὁρῶν
ἀεὶ τοιαῦτα γιγνόμενα ψηφίσματα.
οὐκ οἶσθ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ οὕδοξε τὸ περὶ τῶν ἁλῶν;

Ἀνὴρ Α

ἔγωγε.

Ἀνὴρ Β
τοὺς χαλκοῦς δ᾽ ἐκείνους ἡνίκα
ἐψηφισάμεθ᾽, οὐκ οἶσθα;

Ἀνὴρ Α
καὶ κακόν γέ μοι
τὸ κόμμ᾽ ἐγένετ᾽ ἐκεῖνο. πωλῶν γὰρ βότρυς
μεστὴν ἀπῆρα τὴν γνάθον χαλκῶν ἔχων
κἄπειτ᾽ ἐχώρουν εἰς ἀγορὰν ἐπ᾽ ἄλφιτα.
ἔπειθ᾽ ὑπέχοντος ἄρτι μου τὸν θύλακον,
ἀνέκραγ᾽ ὁ κῆρυξ μὴ δέχεσθαι μηδένα
χαλκοῦν τὸ λοιπόν: ‘ἀργύρῳ γὰρ χρώμεθα.’

Ἀνὴρ Β

τὸ δ᾽ ἔναγχος οὐχ ἅπαντες ἡμεῖς ὤμνυμεν
τάλαντ᾽ ἔσεσθαι πεντακόσια τῇ πόλει
τῆς τετταρακοστῆς, ἣν ἐπόρισ᾽ Εὐριπίδης;
κεὐθὺς κατεχρύσου πᾶς ἀνὴρ Εὐριπίδην:
ὅτε δὴ δ᾽ ἀνασκοπουμένοις ἐφαίνετο
ὁ Διὸς Κόρινθος καὶ τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ οὐκ ἤρκεσεν,
πάλιν κατεπίττου πᾶς ἀνὴρ Εὐριπίδην.

Ἀνὴρ Α

οὐ ταὐτὸν ὦ τᾶν. τότε μὲν ἡμεῖς ἤρχομεν,
νῦν δ᾽ αἱ γυναῖκες.

Ἀνὴρ Β
ἃς ἐγὼ φυλάξομαι
νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ μὴ κατουρήσωσί μου.

Ἀνὴρ Α

οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅ τι ληρεῖς. φέρε σὺ τἀνάφορον ὁ παῖς.

Κηρύκαινα

ὦ πάντες ἀστοί, νῦν γὰρ οὕτω ταῦτ᾽ ἔχει,
χωρεῖτ᾽ ἐπείγεσθ᾽ εὐθὺ τῆς στρατηγίδος,
ὅπως ἂν ὑμῖν ἡ τύχη κληρουμένοις
φράσῃ καθ᾽ ἕκαστον ἄνδρ᾽ ὅποι δειπνήσετε:
ὡς αἱ τράπεζαί γ᾽ εἰσὶν ἐπινενησμέναι
ἀγαθῶν ἁπάντων καὶ παρεσκευασμέναι,
κλῖναί τε σισυρῶν καὶ δαπίδων †νενασμέναι†,
κρατῆρα συγκιρνᾶσιν, αἱ μυροπώλιδες
ἑστᾶσ᾽ ἐφεξῆς, τὰ τεμάχη ῥιπίζεται,
λαγῷ᾽ ἀναπηγνύασι, πόπανα πέττεται,
στέφανοι πλέκονται, φρύγεται τραγήματα,
χύτρας ἔτνους ἔψουσιν αἱ νεώταται.
Σμοῖος δ᾽ ἐν αὐταῖς ἱππικὴν στολὴν ἔχων
τὰ τῶν γυναικῶν διακαθαίρει τρύβλια.

Γέρων δὲ χωρεῖ χλανίδα καὶ κονίποδε
ἔχων, καχάζων μεθ᾽ ἑτέρου νεανίου:
ἐμβὰς δὲ κεῖται καὶ τρίβων ἐρριμμένος.
πρὸς ταῦτα χωρεῖθ᾽, ὡς ὁ τὴν μᾶζαν φέρων
ἕστηκεν: ἀλλὰ τὰς γνάθους διοίγνυτε.

Ἀνὴρ Β

οὐκοῦν βαδιοῦμαι δῆτα. τί γὰρ ἕστηκ᾽ ἔχων
ἐνταῦθ᾽, ἐπειδὴ ταῦτα τῇ πόλει δοκεῖ;

Ἀνὴρ Α

καὶ ποῖ βαδιεῖ σὺ μὴ καταθεὶς τὴν οὐσίαν;

Ἀνὴρ Β

ἐπὶ δεῖπνον.

Ἀνὴρ Α
οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἤν γ᾽ ἐκείναις νοῦς ἐνῇ,
πρίν γ᾽ ἂν ἀπενέγκῃς.

Ἀνὴρ Β
ἀλλ᾽ ἀποίσω.

Ἀνὴρ Α
πηνίκα;

Ἀνὴρ Β

οὐ τοὐμὸν ὦ τᾶν ἐμποδὼν ἔσται.

Ἀνὴρ Α
τί δή;

Ἀνὴρ Β

ἑτέρους ἀποίσειν φήμ᾽ ἔθ᾽ ὑστέρους ἐμοῦ.

Ἀνὴρ Α

βαδιεῖ δὲ δειπνήσων ὅμως;

Ἀνὴρ Β
τί γὰρ πάθω;
τὰ δυνατὰ γὰρ δεῖ τῇ πόλει ξυλλαμβάνειν
τοὺς εὖ φρονοῦντας.

Ἀνὴρ Α
ἢν δὲ κωλύσωσι, τί;

Ἀνὴρ Β

ὀμόσ᾽ εἶμι κύψας.

Ἀνὴρ Α
ἢν δὲ μαστιγῶσι, τί;

Ἀνὴρ Β

καλούμεθ᾽ αὐτάς.

Ἀνὴρ Α
ἢν δὲ καταγελῶσι, τί;

Ἀνὴρ Β

ἐπὶ ταῖς θύραις ἑστώς —

Ἀνὴρ Α
τί δράσεις; εἰπέ μοι.

Ἀνὴρ Β

τῶν ἐσφερόντων ἁρπάσομαι τὰ σιτία.

Ἀνὴρ Α

βάδιζε τοίνυν ὕστερος: σὺ δ᾽ ὦ Σίκων

καὶ Παρμένων αἴρεσθε τὴν παμπησίαν.

Ἀνὴρ Β

φέρε νυν ἐγώ σοι ξυμφέρω.

Ἀνὴρ Α
μὴ μηδαμῶς.
δέδοικα γὰρ μὴ καὶ παρὰ τῇ στρατηγίδι,
ὅταν κατατιθῶ, προσποιῇ τῶν χρημάτων.

Ἀνὴρ Β

νὴ τὸν Δία δεῖ γοῦν μηχανήματός τινος,
ὅπως τὰ μὲν ὄντα χρήμαθ᾽ ἕξω, τοισδεδὶ
τῶν ματτομένων κοινῇ μεθέξω πως ἐγώ.
ὀρθῶς ἔμοιγε φαίνεται: βαδιστέον
ὁμόσ᾽ ἐστὶ δειπνήσοντα κοὐ μελλητέον.

Γραῦς Α

τί ποθ᾽ ἄνδρες οὐχ ἥκουσιν; ὥρα δ᾽ ἦν πάλαι:
ἐγὼ δὲ καταπεπλασμένη ψιμυθίῳ
ἕστηκα καὶ κροκωτὸν ἠμφιεσμένη
ἀργός, μινυρομένη τι πρὸς ἐμαυτὴν μέλος,
ἀργός, μινυρομένη τι πρὸς ἐμαυτὴν μέλος,
παίζουσα. πῶς ἂν περιλάβοιμ᾽ αὐτῶν τινὰ
παριόντα; Μοῦσαι δεῦρ᾽ ἴτ᾽ ἐπὶ τοὐμὸν στόμα,
μελύδριον εὑροῦσαί τι τῶν Ἰωνικῶν.

Νεᾶνις

νῦν μέν με παρακύψασα προὔφθης ὦ σαπρά.
ᾧου δ᾽ ἐρήμας οὐ παρούσης ἐνθάδε
ἐμοῦ τρυγήσειν καὶ προσάξεσθαί τινα
ᾄδουσ᾽: ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἦν τοῦτο δρᾷς ἀντᾴσομαι.
κεἰ γὰρ δι᾽ ὄχλου τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ τοῖς θεωμένοις,
ὅμως ἔχει τερπνόν τι καὶ κωμῳδικόν.

Γραῦς Α

τούτῳ διαλέγου κἀποχώρησον: σὺ δὲ
φιλοττάριον αὐλητὰ τοὺς αὐλοὺς λαβὼν
ἄξιον ἐμοῦ καὶ σοῦ προσαύλησον μέλος.

Γραῦς Α

εἴ τις ἀγαθὸν βούλεται παθεῖν
τι, παρ᾽ ἐμοὶ χρὴ καθεύδειν.
οὐ γὰρ ἐν νέαις τὸ σοφὸν ἔνεστιν
ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ταῖς πεπείραις:
οὐδέ τις στέργειν ἂν ἐθέλοι μᾶλλον ἢ ‘γὼ
τὸν φίλον ᾧπερ ξυνείην,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ἕτερον ἂν πέτοιτο.

Νεᾶνις

μὴ φθόνει ταῖσιν νέαισι.
τὸ τρυφερὸν γὰρ ἐμπέφυκε
τοῖς ἀπαλοῖσι μηροῖς
κἀπὶ τοῖς μήλοις ἐπανθεῖ: σὺ δ᾽ ὦ γραῦ,
παραλέλεξαι κἀντέτριψαι,
τῷ θανάτῳ μέλημα. **Γραῦς Α**

ἐκπέσοι σου τὸ τρῆμα
τό τ᾽ ἐπίκλιντρον ἀποβάλοιο
βουλομένη σποδεῖσθαι,
κἀπὶ τῆς κλίνης ὅφιν εὕροις
καὶ προσελκύσαιο ...
βουλομένη φιλῆσαι. **Νεᾶνις**

αἰαῖ τί ποτε πείσομαι;
οὐχ ἥκει μοὐταῖρος:
μόνη δ᾽ αὐτοῦ λείπομ᾽: ἡ
γὰρ μοι μήτηρ ἄλλῃ
βέβηκε: †καὶ τἄλλ᾽ οὐδὲν μετὰ ταῦτα δεῖ λέγειν†.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ μαῖ᾽ ἱκετεύομαι, κάλει
τὸν Ὀρθαγόραν, ὅπως
σαυτῆς κατόναι᾽, ἀντιβολῶ σε. **Γραῦς Α**

ἤδη τὸν ἀπ᾽ Ἰωνίας
τρόπον τάλαινα κνησιᾷς:

*

δοκεῖς δέ μοι καὶ λάβδα κατὰ τοὺς Λεσβίους.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἄν ποθ᾽ ὑφαρπάσαιο
τἀμὰ παίγνια: τὴν δ᾽ ἐμὴν
ὥραν οὐκ ἀπολεῖς οὐδ᾽ ἀπολήψει. **Νεᾶνις**

ᾇδ᾽ ὁπόσα βούλει καὶ παράκυφθ᾽ ὥσπερ γαλῆ:
οὐδεὶς γὰρ ὡς σὲ πρότερον εἴσεισ᾽ ἀντ᾽ ἐμοῦ.

Γραῦς Α

οὔκουν ἐπ᾽ ἐκφοράν γε.

Νεᾶνις
καινόν γ᾽ ὦ σαπρά.

Γραῦς Α

οὐ δῆτα.

Νεᾶνις
τί γὰρ ἂν γραῒ καινά τις λέγοι;

Γραῦς Α

οὐ τοὐμὸν ὀδυνήσει σε γῆρας.

Νεᾶνις
ἀλλὰ τί;
ἤγχουσα μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ σὸν ψιμύθιον;

Γραῦς Α

τί μοι διαλέγει;

Νεᾶνις
σὺ δὲ τί διακύπτεις;

Γραῦς Α
ἐγώ;
ᾄδω πρὸς ἐμαυτὴν Ἐπιγένει τὠμῷ φίλῳ.

Νεᾶνις

σοὶ γὰρ φίλος τίς ἐστιν ἄλλος ἢ Γέρης;

Γραῦς Α

δείξει γε καὶ σοί. τάχα γὰρ εἶσιν ὡς ἐμέ.

Νεᾶνις

ὁδὶ γὰρ αὐτός ἐστιν.

Γραῦς Α
οὐ σοῦ γ᾽ ὦλεθρε
935 δεόμενος οὐδέν.

Νεᾶνις
νὴ Δί᾽ ὦ φθίνυλλα σὺ
δείξει τάχ᾽ αὐτός, ὡς ἔγωγ᾽ ἀπέρχομαι.

Γραῦς Α

κἄγωγ᾽, ἵνα γνῷς ὡς πολύ σου μεῖζον φρονῶ.

Νεανίας

εἴθ᾽ ἐξῆν παρὰ τῇ νέᾳ καθεύδειν,
καὶ μὴ δ᾽ει πρότερον διασποδῆσαι
940 ἀνάσιμον ἢ πρεσβυτέραν:
οὐ γὰρ ἀνασχετὸν τοῦτό γ᾽ ἐλευθέρῳ.

Γραῦς Α

οἰμώζων ἄρα νὴ Δία σποδήσεις.
οὐ γὰρ τἀπὶ Χαριξένης τάδ᾽ ἐστίν.
κατὰ τὸν νόμον ταῦτα ποιεῖν

ἔστι δίκαιον, εἰ δημοκρατούμεθα.

Γραῦς Α

ἀλλ᾽ εἶμι τηρήσουσ᾽ ὅ τι καὶ δράσει ποτέ.

Νεανίας

εἴθ᾽ ὦ θεοὶ λάβοιμι τὴν καλὴν μόνην,
ἐφ᾽ ἣν πεπωκὼς ἔρχομαι πάλαι ποθῶν.

Νεᾶνις

ἐξηπάτησα τὸ κατάρατον γράδιον:
φρούδη γάρ ἐστιν οἰομένη μ᾽ ἔνδον μένειν.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐτοσὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς οὗ ‘μεμνήμεθα.

Νεᾶνις

δεῦρο δὴ δεῦρο δή,
φίλον ἐμόν, δεῦρό μοι
πρόσελθε καὶ ξύνευνος
τὴν εὐφρόνην ὅπως ἔσει.
πάνυ γάρ τις ἔρως με δονεῖ
τῶνδε τῶν σῶν βοστρύχων.
ἄτοπος δ᾽ ἔγκειταί μοί τις
πόθος, ὅς με διακναίσας ἔχει.
μέθες, ἱκνοῦμαί σ᾽ Ἔρως,
καὶ ποίησον τόνδ᾽ ἐς εὐνὴν
τὴν ἐμὴν ἱκέσθαι. **Νεανίας**

δεῦρο δὴ δεῦρο δή,
καὶ σύ μοι καταδραμοῦσα
τὴν θύραν ἄνοιξον
τήνδ᾽: εἰ δὲ μή, καταπεσὼν κείσομαι.
φίλον, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν τῷ σῷ
βούλομαι κόλπῳ πληκτίζεσθαι
μετὰ τῆς σῆς πυγῆς.
Κύπρι τί μ᾽ ἐκμαίνεις ἐπὶ ταύτῃ;
μέθες, ἱκνοῦμαί σ᾽ Ἔρως,

καὶ ποίησον τήνδ᾽ ἐς εὐνὴν
τὴν ἐμὴν ἱκέσθαι. **Νεᾶνις**

καὶ ταῦτα μέντοι μετρίως πρὸς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάγκην
εἰρημέν᾽ ἐστίν. σὺ δέ μοι, φίλτατον, ὧ ἱκετεύω,
ἄνοιξον ἀσπάζου με:
διά τοι σὲ πόνους ἔχω. **Νεανίας**

ὦ χρυσοδαίδαλτον ἐμὸν μέλημα, Κύπριδος ἔρνος,
μέλιττα Μούσης, Χαρίτων θρέμμα, Τρυφῆς πρόσωπον,
ἄνοιξον ἀσπάζου με:
διά τοι σὲ πόνους ἔχω. **Γραῦς Α**

οὗτος τί κόπτεις; μῶν ἐμὲ ζητεῖς;

Νεανίας
πόθεν;

Γραῦς Α

καὶ τὴν θύραν γ᾽ ἤραττες.

Νεανίας
ἀποθάνοιμ᾽ ἄρα.

Γραῦς Α

τοῦ δαὶ δεόμενος δᾷδ᾽ ἔχων ἐλήλυθας;

Νεανίας

Ἀναφλύστιον ζητῶν τιν᾽ ἄνθρωπον.

Γραῦς Α
τίνα;

Νεανίας

οὐ τὸν Σεβῖνον, ὃν σὺ προσδοκᾷς ἴσως.

Γραῦς Α

νὴ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην, ἤν τε βούλῃ γ᾽ ἤν τε μή.

Νεανίας

ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ νυνὶ τὰς ὑπερεξηκοντέτεις
εἰσάγομεν, ἀλλ᾽ εἰσαῦθις ἀναβεβλήμεθα.
τὰς ἐντὸς εἴκοσιν γὰρ ἐκδικάζομεν.

Γραῦς Α

985 ἐπὶ τῆς προτέρας ἀρχῆς γε ταῦτ᾽ ἦν ὦ γλύκων:
νυνὶ δὲ πρῶτον εἰσάγειν ἡμᾶς δοκεῖ.

Νεανίας

τῷ βουλομένῳ γε κατὰ τὸν ἐν πεττοῖς νόμον.

Γραῦς Α

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ δειπνεῖς κατὰ τὸν ἐν πεττοῖς νόμον.

Νεανίας

οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅ τι λέγεις: τηνδεδί μοι κρουστέον.

Γραῦς Α

990 ὅταν γε κρούσῃς τὴν ἐμὴν πρῶτον θύραν.

Νεανίας

ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ νυνὶ κρησέραν αἰτούμεθα.

Γραῦς Α

οἶδ᾽ ὅτι φιλοῦμαι: νῦν δὲ θαυμάζεις ὅτι
θύρασί μ᾽ ἦρες: ἀλλὰ πρόσαγε τὸ στόμα.

Νεανίας

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ μέλ᾽ ὀρρωδῶ τὸν ἐραστήν σου.

Γραῦς Α
τίνα;

Νεανίας

τὸν τῶν γραφέων ἄριστον.

Γραῦς Α
οὗτος δ᾽ ἔστι τίς;

Νεανίας

ὃς τοῖς νεκροῖσι ζωγραφεῖ τὰς ληκύθους.
ἀλλ᾽ ἄπιθ᾽, ὅπως μή σ᾽ ἐπὶ θύραισιν ὄψεται.

Γραῦς Α

οἶδ᾽ οἶδ᾽ ὅ τι βούλει.

Νεανίας
καὶ γὰρ ἐγώ σε νὴ Δία.

Γραῦς Α

μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην ἥ μ᾽ ἔλαχε κληρουμένη,
μὴ ‘γώ σ᾽ ἀφήσω.

Νεανίας
παραφρονεῖς ὦ γράδιον.

Γραῦς Α

ληρεῖς: ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἄξω σ᾽ ἐπὶ τἀμὰ στρώματα.

Νεανίας

τί δῆτα κρεάγρας τοῖς κάδοις ὠνούμεθα,
ἐξὸν καθέντα γράδιον τοιουτονὶ

ἐκ τῶν φρεάτων τοὺς κάδους ξυλλαμβάνειν;

Γραῦς Α

μὴ σκῶπτέ μ᾽ ὦ τάλαν ἀλλ᾽ ἔπου δεῦρ᾽ ὡς ἐμέ.

Νεανίας

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἀνάγκη μοὐστίν, εἰ μὴ τῶν ἐμῶν
τὴν πεντακοσιοστὴν κατέθηκας τῇ πόλει.

Γραῦς Α

νὴ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην δεῖ γε μέντοι σ᾽. ὡς ἐγὼ
τοῖς τηλικούτοις ξυγκαθεύδουσ᾽ ἥδομαι.

Νεανίας

ἐγὼ δὲ ταῖς γε τηλικαύταις ἄχθομαι,
κοὐκ ἂν πιθοίμην οὐδέποτ᾽.

Γραῦς Α
ἀλλὰ νὴ Δία
ἀναγκάσει τουτί σε.

Νεανίας
τοῦτο δ᾽ ἔστι τί;

Γραῦς Α

ψήφισμα, καθ᾽ ὅ σε δεῖ βαδίζειν ὡς ἐμέ.

Νεανίας

λέγ᾽ αὐτὸ τί ποτε κἄστι.

Γραῦς Α
καὶ δή σοι λέγω.
ἔδοξε ταῖς γυναιξίν, ἢν ἀνὴρ νέος
νέας ἐπιθυμῇ, μὴ σποδεῖν αὐτὴν πρὶν ἂν

τὴν γραῦν προκρούσῃ πρῶτον: ἢν δὲ μὴ ‘θέλῃ
πρότερον προκρούειν ἀλλ᾽ ἐπιθυμῇ τῆς νέας,
ταῖς πρεσβυτέραις γυναιξὶν ἔστω τὸν νέον
ἕλκειν ἀνατεὶ λαβομένας τοῦ παττάλου.

Νεανίας

οἴμοι Προκρούστης τήμερον γενήσομαι.

Γραῦς Α

τοῖς γὰρ νόμοις τοῖς ἡμετέροισι πειστέον.

Νεανίας

τί δ᾽ ἢν ἀφαιρῆταί μ᾽ ἀνὴρ τῶν δημοτῶν
ἢ τῶν φίλων ἐλθών τις;

Γραῦς Α
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ κύριος
ὑπὲρ μέδιμνόν ἐστ᾽ ἀνὴρ οὐδεὶς ἔτι.

Νεανίας

ἐξωμοσία δ᾽ οὐκ ἔστιν;

Γραῦς Α
οὐ γὰρ δεῖ στροφῆς.

Νεανίας

ἀλλ᾽ ἔμπορος εἶναι σκήψομαι.

Γραῦς Α
κλάων γε σύ.

Νεανίας

τί δῆτα χρὴ δρᾶν;

Γραῦς Α
δεῦρ᾽ ἀκολουθεῖν ὡς ἐμέ.

Νεανίας

καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἀνάγκη μοὐστί;

Γραῦς Α
Διομήδειά γε.

Νεανίας

ὑποστόρεσαί νυν πρῶτα τῆς ὀριγάνου
καὶ κλήμαθ᾽ ὑπόθου συγκλάσασα τέτταρα,
καὶ ταινίωσαι καὶ παράθου τὰς ληκύθους,
ὕδατός τε κατάθου τοὔστρακον πρὸ τῆς θύρας.

Γραῦς Α

ἦ μὴν ἔτ᾽ ὠνήσει σὺ καὶ στεφάνην ἐμοί.

Νεανίας

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἥνπερ ᾗ γέ που τῶν κηρίνων:
οἶμαι γὰρ ἔνδον διαπεσεῖσθαί σ᾽ αὐτίκα.

Νεᾶνις

ποῖ τοῦτον ἕλκεις;

Γραῦς Α
τὸν ἐμὸν αὐτῆς εἰσάγω.

Νεᾶνις

οὐ σωφρονοῦσά γ᾽: οὐ γὰρ ἡλικίαν ἔχει
παρὰ σοὶ καθεύδειν τηλικοῦτος ὤν, ἐπεὶ
μήτηρ ἂν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον εἴης ἢ γυνή.
ὥστ᾽ εἰ καταστήσεσθε τοῦτον τὸν νόμον,
τὴν γῆν ἅπασαν Οἰδιπόδων ἐμπλήσετε.

Γραῦς Α

ὦ παμβδελυρὰ φθονοῦσα τόνδε τὸν λόγον
ἐξηῦρες: ἀλλ᾽ ἐγώ σε τιμωρήσομαι.

Νεανίας

νὴ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτῆρα κεχάρισαί γέ μοι
ὦ γλυκύτατον τὴν γραῦν ἀπαλλάξασά μου:
ὥστ᾽ ἀντὶ τούτων τῶν ἀγαθῶν εἰς ἑσπέραν
μεγάλην ἀποδώσω καὶ παχεῖάν σοι χάριν.

Γραῦς Β

αὕτη σὺ ποῖ τονδὶ παραβᾶσα τὸν νόμον
ἕλκεις, παρ᾽ ἐμοὶ τῶν γραμμάτων εἰρηκότων
πρότερον καθεύδειν αὐτόν;

Νεανίας
οἴμοι δείλαιος.
πόθεν ἐξέκυψας ὦ κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολουμένη;
τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκείνου τὸ κακὸν ἐξωλέστερον.

Γραῦς Β

βάδιζε δεῦρο.

Νεανίας
μηδαμῶς με περιίδῃς
ἑλκόμενον ὑπὸ τῆσδ᾽ ἀντιβολῶ σ᾽.

Γραῦς Β
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐγώ,
ἀλλ᾽ ὁ νόμος ἕλκει σ᾽.

Νεανίας
οὐκ ἐμέ γ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἔμπουσά τις
ἐξ αἵματος φλύκταιναν ἠμφιεσμένη.

Γραῦς Β

ἔπου μαλακίων δεῦρ᾽ ἀνύσας καὶ μὴ λάλει.

Νεανίας

ἴθι νυν ἔασον εἰς ἄφοδον πρώτιστά με
ἐλθόντα θαρρῆσαι πρὸς ἐμαυτόν: εἰ δὲ μή,
αὐτοῦ τι δρῶντα πυρρὸν ὄψει μ᾽ αὐτίκα
ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους.

Γραῦς Β
θάρρει, βάδιζ᾽: ἔνδον χεσεῖ.

Νεανίας

δέδοικα κἀγὼ μὴ πλέον γ᾽ ἢ βούλομαι.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐγγυητάς σοι καταστήσω δύο
ἀξιόχρεως.

Γραῦς Β
μή μοι καθίστη.

Γραῦς Γ

ποῖ σὺ ποῖ
χωρεῖς μετὰ ταύτης;

Νεανίας
οὐκ ἔγωγ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἕλκομαι.
ἀτὰρ ἥτις εἶ γε, πόλλ᾽ ἀγαθὰ γένοιτό σοι,
ὅτι μ᾽ οὐπεριεῖδες ἐπιτριβέντ᾽. ὦ Ἡράκλεις
ὦ Πᾶνες ὦ Κορύβαντες ὦ Διοσκόρω,
τοῦτ᾽ αὖ πολὺ τούτου τὸ κακὸν ἐξωλέστερον.
ἀτὰρ τί τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἀντιβολῶ τουτί ποτε;
πότερον πίθηκος ἀνάπλεως ψιμυθίου,
ἢ γραῦς ἀνεστηκυῖα παρὰ τῶν πλειόνων;

Γραῦς Γ

μὴ σκῶπτέ μ᾽ ἀλλὰ δεῦρ᾽ ἔπου.

Γραῦς Β
δευρὶ μὲν οὖν.

Γραῦς Γ

ὡς οὐκ ἀφήσω σ᾽ οὐδέποτ᾽.

Γραῦς Β
οὐδὲ μὴν ἐγώ.

Νεανίας

διασπάσεσθέ μ᾽ ὦ κακῶς ἀπολούμεναι.

Γραῦς Β

ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἀκολουθεῖν σ᾽ ἔδει κατὰ τὸν νόμον.

Γραῦς Γ

οὐκ ἦν ἑτέρα γε γραῦς ἔτ᾽ αἰσχίων φανῇ.

Νεανίας

ἦν οὖν ὑφ᾽ ὑμῶν πρῶτον ἀπόλωμαι κακῶς,
φέρε πῶς ἐπ᾽ ἐκείνην τὴν καλὴν ἀφίξομαι;

Γραῦς Γ

αὐτὸς σκόπει σύ: τάδε δέ σοι ποιητέον.

Νεανίας

ποτέρας προτέρας οὖν κατελάσας ἀπαλλαγῶ;

Γραῦς Β

οὐκ οἶσθα; βαδιεῖ δεῦρ᾽.

Νεανίας
ἀφέτω νύν μ᾽ αὐτηί.

Γραῦς Γ

δευρὶ μὲν οὖν ἴθ᾽ ὡς ἔμ᾽.

Νεανίας
ἢν ἡδί μ᾽ ἀφῇ.

Γραῦς Β

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἀφήσω μὰ Δία σ᾽.

Γραῦς Γ
οὐδὲ μὴν ἐγώ.

Νεανίας

χαλεπαί γ᾽ ἂν ἦστε γενόμεναι πορθμῆς.

Γραῦς Β
τιή;

Νεανίας

ἕλκοντε τοὺς πλωτῆρας ἂν ἀπεκναίετε.

Γραῦς Β

σιγῇ βάδιζε δεῦρο.

Γραῦς Γ
μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἐμέ.

Νεανίας

τουτὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα κατὰ τὸ Καννωνοῦ σαφῶς
ψήφισμα, βινεῖν δεῖ με διαλελημμένον.
πῶς οὖν δικωπεῖν ἀμφοτέρας δυνήσομαι;

Γραῦς Β

καλῶς, ἐπειδὰν καταφάγῃς βολβῶν χύτραν.

Νεανίας

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων ἐγγὺς ἤδη τῆς θύρας
ἑλκόμενός εἰμ᾽.

Γραῦς Β
ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἔσται σοι πλέον.
ξυνεσπεσοῦμαι γὰρ μετὰ σοῦ.

Νεανίας
μὴ πρὸς θεῶν:
ἑνὶ γὰρ ξυνέχεσθαι κρεῖττον ἢ δυοῖν κακοῖν.

Γραῦς Γ

νὴ τὴν Ἑκάτην ἐάν τε βούλῃ γ᾽ ἤν τέ μή.

Νεανίας

ὦ τρισκακοδαίμων εἰ γυναῖκα δεῖ σαπρὰν
βινεῖν ὅλην τὴν νύκτα καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν,
κἄπειτ᾽ ἐπειδὰν τῆσδ᾽ ἀπαλλαγῶ, πάλιν
φρύνην ἔχουσαν λήκυθον πρὸς ταῖς γνάθοις.
ἆρ᾽ οὐ κακοδαίμων εἰμί; βαρυδαίμων μὲν οὖν
νὴ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτῆρ᾽ ἀνὴρ καὶ δυστυχής,
ὅστις τοιούτοις θηρίοις συνείρξομαι.
ὅμως δ᾽ ἐάν τι πολλὰ πολλάκις πάθω
ὑπὸ τοῖνδε τοῖν κασαλβάδοιν δεῦρ᾽ ἐσπλέων,
θάψαι μ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ τῷ στόματι τῆς ἐσβολῆς,
καὶ τήνδ᾽ ἄνωθεν ἐπιπολῆς τοῦ σήματος
ζῶσαν καταπιττώσαντες εἶτα τὼ πόδε
μολυβδοχοήσαντες κύκλῳ περὶ τὰ σφυρὰ
ἄνω ‘πιθεῖναι πρόφασιν ἀντὶ ληκύθου.

Θεραπαίνα

ὦ μακάριος μὲν δῆμος, εὐδαίμων δ᾽ ἐγώ,
αὐτή τέ μοι δέσποινα μακαριωτάτη,

ὑμεῖς θ᾽ ὅσαι παρέστατ᾽ ἐπὶ ταῖσιν θύραις
οἱ γείτονές τε πάντες οἵ τε δημόται,
ἐγώ τε πρὸς τούτοισιν ἡ διάκονος,
ἥτις μεμύρισμαι τὴν κεφαλὴν μυρώμασιν,
ἀγαθοῖσιν ὦ Ζεῦ: πολὺ δ᾽ ὑπερπέπαικεν αὖ
τούτων ἁπάντων τὰ Θάσι᾽ ἀμφορείδια.
ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ γὰρ ἐμμένει πολὺν χρόνον:
τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἀπανθήσαντα πάντ᾽ ἀπέπτετο:
ὥστ᾽ ἐστὶ πολὺ βέλτιστα, πολὺ δῆτ᾽ ὦ θεοί.
κέρασον ἄκρατον, εὐφρανεῖ τὴν νύχθ᾽ ὅλην
ἐκλεγομένας ὅ τι ἂν μάλιστ᾽ ὀσμὴν ἔχῃ.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ γυναῖκες φράσατέ μοι τὸν δεσπότην,
τὸν ἄνδρ᾽, ὅπου ‘στί, τῆς ἐμῆς κεκτημένης.

Χορὸς

αὐτοῦ μένουσ᾽ ἡμῖν γ᾽ ἂν ἐξευρεῖν δοκεῖς.

Θεραπαίνα

μάλισθ᾽: ὀδὶ γὰρ ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον ἔρχεται.
ὦ δέσποτ᾽ ὦ μακάριε καὶ τρισόλβιε.

Βλέπυρος

ἐγώ;

Θεραπαίνα
σὺ μέντοι νὴ Δί᾽ ὥς γ᾽ οὐδεὶς ἀνήρ.
τίς γὰρ γένοιτ᾽ ἂν μᾶλλον ὀλβιώτερος,
ὅστις πολιτῶν πλεῖον ἢ τρισμυρίων
ὄντων τὸ πλῆθος οὐ δεδείπνηκας μόνος;

Χορὸς

εὐδαιμονικόν γ᾽ ἄνθρωπον εἴρηκας σαφῶς.

Θεραπαίνα

ποῖ ποῖ βαδίζεις;

Βλέπυρος
ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον ἔρχομαι.

Θεραπαίνα

νὴ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην πολύ γ᾽ ἁπάντων ὕστατος.
ὅμως δ᾽ ἐκέλευε συλλαβοῦσάν μ᾽ ἡ γυνὴ
ἄγειν σε καὶ τασδὶ μετὰ σοῦ τὰς μείρακας.
οἶνος δὲ Χῖός ἐστι περιλελειμμένος
καὶ τἄλλ᾽ ἀγαθά. πρὸς ταῦτα μὴ βραδύνετε,
καὶ τῶν θεατῶν εἴ τις εὔνους τυγχάνει,
καὶ τῶν κριτῶν εἰ μή τις ἐτέρωσε βλέπει,
ἴτω μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν: πάντα γὰρ παρέξομεν.

Βλέπυρος

οὔκουν ἅπασι δῆτα γενναίως ἐρεῖς
καὶ μὴ παραλείψεις μηδέν᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐλευθέρως
καλεῖς γέροντα μειράκιον παιδίσκον; ὡς
τὸ δεῖπνον αὐτοῖς ἐστ᾽ ἐπεσκευασμένον
ἁπαξάπασιν, ἢν ἀπίωσιν οἴκαδε.
ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς τὸ δεῖπνον ἤδη ‘πείξομαι:
ἔχω δέ τοι καὶ δᾷδα ταυτηνὶ καλῶς.

Χορὸς

τί δῆτα διατρίβεις ἔχων, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἄγεις
τασδὶ λαβών; ἐν ὅσῳ δὲ καταβαίνεις, ἐγὼ
ἐπᾴσομαι μέλος τι μελλοδειπνικόν.
σμικρὸν δ᾽ ὑποθέσθαι τοῖς κριταῖσι βούλομαι.

Χορὸς

τοῖς σοφοῖς μὲν τῶν σοφῶν μεμνημένοις κρίνειν ἐμέ,
τοῖς γελῶσι δ᾽ ἡδέως διὰ τὸν γέλων κρίνειν ἐμέ:
σχεδὸν ἅπαντας οὖν κελεύω δηλαδὴ κρίνειν ἐμέ,
μηδὲ τὸν κλῆρον γενέσθαι μηδὲν ἡμῖν αἴτιον,
ὅτι προείληχ᾽: ἀλλὰ πάντα ταῦτα χρὴ μεμνημένους
μὴ ‘πιορκεῖν ἀλλὰ κρίνειν τοὺς χοροὺς ὀρθῶς ἀεί,

μηδὲ ταῖς κακαῖς ἑταίραις τὸν τρόπον προσεικέναι,
αἳ μόνον μνήμην ἔχουσι τῶν τελευταίων ἀεί. **Χορὸς**

ὦ ὦ ὥρα δή,
ὦ φίλαι γυναῖκες, εἴπερ μέλλομεν τὸ χρῆμα δρᾶν,
ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον ὑπαποκινεῖν. κρητικῶς οὖν τὼ πόδε
καὶ σὺ κίνει.

Βλέπυρος
τοῦτο δρῶ.

Χορὸς
καὶ τάσδε νῦν ...

Λαγαρὰς τοῖν σκελίσκοιν τὸν ῥυθμόν.

Χορὸς

τάχα γὰρ ἔπεισι
λοπαδοτεμαχοσελαχογαλεο-
κρανιολειψανοδριμυποτριμματο-
σιλφιοτυρομελιτοκατακεχυμενο-
κιχλεπικοσσυφοφαττοπεριστερα-
λεκτρυονοπτεκεφαλλιοκιγκλοπε-
λειολαγῳοσιραιοβαφητραγα-
νοπτερυγών: σὺ δὲ ταῦτ᾽ ἀκροασάμενος
ταχὺ καὶ ταχέως λαβὲ τρύβλιον:
εἶτα λαβὼν κόνισαι
λέκιθον, ἵν᾽ ἐπιδειπνῇς:
ἀλλὰ λαιμάττουσί που.
αἴρεσθ᾽ ἄνω, ἰαὶ εὐαί.
δειπνήσομεν, εὐοῖ εὐαί,
εὐαί, ὡς ἐπὶ νίκῃ:
εὐαί, εὐαί, εὐαί, εὐαί.

WEALTH

Καρίων

ὡς ἀργαλέον πρᾶγμ᾽ ἐστὶν ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ θεοὶ
δοῦλον γενέσθαι παραφρονοῦντος δεσπότου.
ἦν γὰρ τὰ βέλτισθ᾽ ὁ θεράπων λέξας τύχῃ,
δόξῃ δὲ μὴ δρᾶν ταῦτα τῷ κεκτημένῳ,
μετέχειν ἀνάγκη τὸν θεράποντα τῶν κακῶν.
τοῦ σώματος γὰρ οὐκ ἐᾷ τὸν κύριον
κρατεῖν ὁ δαίμων, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἐωνημένον.
καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ ταῦτα. τῷ δὲ Λοξίᾳ,
ὃς θεσπιῳδεῖ τρίποδος ἐκ χρυσηλάτου,
μέμψιν δικαίαν μέμφομαι ταύτην, ὅτι
ἰατρὸς ὢν καὶ μάντις, ὥς φασιν, σοφὸς
μελαγχολῶντ᾽ ἀπέπεμψέ μου τὸν δεσπότην,
ὅστις ἀκολουθεῖ κατόπιν ἀνθρώπου τυφλοῦ,
τοὐναντίον δρῶν ἢ προσῆκ᾽ αὐτῷ ποιεῖν.
οἱ γὰρ βλέποντες τοῖς τυφλοῖς ἡγούμεθα,
οὗτος δ᾽ ἀκολουθεῖ, κἀμὲ προσβιάζεται,
καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἀποκρινομένῳ τὸ παράπαν οὐδὲ γρῦ.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως σιγήσομαι,
ἢν μὴ φράσῃς ὅ τι τῷδ᾽ ἀκολουθοῦμέν ποτε
ὦ δέσποτ᾽, ἀλλά σοι παρέξω πράγματα.
οὐ γάρ με τυπτήσεις στέφανον ἔχοντά γε.

Χρεμύλος

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἀφελὼν τὸν στέφανον, ἢν λυπῇς τί με,
ἵνα μᾶλλον ἀλγῇς.

Καρίων

λῆρος: οὐ γὰρ παύσομαι
πρὶν ἂν φράσῃς μοι τίς ποτ᾽ ἐστὶν οὑτοσί:
εὖνους γὰρ ὤν σοι πυνθάνομαι πάνυ σφόδρα.

Χρεμύλος

ἀλλ᾽ οὔ σε κρύψω: τῶν ἐμῶν γὰρ οἰκετῶν
πιστότατον ἡγοῦμαί σε καὶ κλεπτίστατον.
ἐγὼ θεοσεβὴς καὶ δίκαιος ὢν ἀνὴρ
κακῶς ἔπραττον καὶ πένης ἦν: **Καρίων**
οἶδά τοι.

Χρεμύλος

ἕτεροι δ᾽ ἐπλούτουν ἱερόσυλοι ῥήτορες
καὶ συκοφάνται καὶ πονηροί: **Καρίων**
πείθομαι.

Χρεμύλος

ἐπερησόμενος οὖν ᾠχόμην ὡς τὸν θεόν,
τὸν ἐμὸν μὲν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ταλαιπώρου σχεδὸν
ἤδη νομίζων ἐκτετοξεῦσθαι βίον,
τὸν δ᾽ υἱόν, ὅσπερ ὢν μόνος μοι τυγχάνει,
πευσόμενος εἰ χρὴ μεταβαλόντα τοὺς τρόπους
εἶναι πανοῦργον, ἄδικον, ὑγιὲς μηδὲ ἕν,
ὡς τῷ βίῳ τοῦτ᾽ αὐτὸ νομίσας συμφέρειν.

Καρίων

τί δῆτα Φοῖβος ἔλακεν ἐκ τῶν στεμμάτων;

Χρεμύλος

πεύσει. σαφῶς γὰρ ὁ θεὸς εἶπέ μοι τοδί:
ὅτῳ ξυναντήσαιμι πρῶτον ἐξιών,
ἐκέλευε τούτου μὴ μεθίεσθαί μ᾽ ἔτι,
πείθειν δ᾽ ἐμαυτῷ ξυνακολουθεῖν οἴκαδε.

Καρίων

καὶ τῷ ξυναντᾷς δῆτα πρώτῳ;

Χρεμύλος
τουτῳί.

Καρίων

εἶτ᾽ οὐ ξυνίης τὴν ἐπίνοιαν τοῦ θεοῦ
φράζουσαν ᾧ σκαιότατέ σοι σαφέστατα
ἀσκεῖν τὸν υἱὸν τὸν ἐπιχώριον τρόπον; **Χρεμύλος**

τῷ τοῦτο κρίνεις;

Καρίων
δῆλον ὁτιὴ καὶ τυφλῷ
γνῶναι δοκεῖ τοῦθ᾽, ὡς σφόδρ᾽ ἐστὶ συμφέρον
τὸ μηδὲν ἀσκεῖν ὑγιὲς ἐν τῷ νῦν χρόνῳ.

Χρεμύλος

οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως ὁ χρησμὸς ἐς τοῦτο ῥέπει,
ἀλλ᾽ εἰς ἕτερόν τι μεῖζον. ἢν δ᾽ ἡμῖν φράσῃ
ὅστις ποτ᾽ ἐστὶν οὑτοσὶ καὶ τοῦ χάριν
καὶ τοῦ δεόμενος ἦλθε μετὰ νῷν ἐνθαδί,
πυθοιμεθ᾽ ἂν τὸν χρησμὸν ἡμῶν ὅ τι νοεῖ.

Καρίων

ἄγε δὴ σὺ πότερον σαυτὸν ὅστις εἶ φράσεις,
ἢ τἀπὶ τούτοις δρῶ; λέγειν χρὴ ταχὺ πάνυ.

Πλοῦτος

ἐγὼ μὲν οἰμώζειν λέγω σοι.

Καρίων
μαναθάνεις
ὅς φησιν εἶναι;

Χρεμύλος
σοὶ λέγει τοῦτ᾽, οὐκ ἐμοί:
σκαιῶς γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ χαλεπῶς ἐκπυνθάνει.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴ τι χαίρεις ἀνδρὸς εὐόρκου τρόποις,
ἐμοὶ φράσον.

Πλοῦτος
κλάειν ἔγωγέ σοι λέγω.

Καρίων

δέχου τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ τὸν ὄρνιν τοῦ θεοῦ.

Χρεμύλος

οὔ τοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα χαιρήσεις ἔτι.
εἰ μὴ φράσεις γάρ — **Καρίων**
ἀπό σ᾽ ὀλῶ κακὸν κακῶς.

Χρεμύλος

ὦ τᾶν —

Πλοῦτος
ἀπαλλάχθητον ἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ.

Χρεμύλος
πώμαλα.

Καρίων

καὶ μὴν ὃ λέγω βέλτιστόν ἐστ᾽ ὦ δέσποτα.
ἀπολῶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον κάκιστα τουτονί.
ἀναθεὶς γὰρ ἐπὶ κρημνόν τιν᾽ αὐτὸν καταλιπων
ἄπειμ᾽, ἵν᾽ ἐκεῖθεν ἐκτραχηλισθῇ πεσών.

Χρεμύλος

ἀλλ᾽ αἶρε ταχέως.

Πλοῦτος
μηδαμῶς.

Χρεμύλος
οὔκουν ἐρεῖς;

Πλοῦτος

ἀλλ᾽ ἢν πύθησθέ μ᾽ ὅστις εἴμ᾽, εὖ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι
κακόν τί μ᾽ ἐργάσεσθε κοὐκ ἀφήσετον.

Χρεμύλος

νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς ἡμεῖς γ᾽, ἐὰν βούλῃ γε σύ.

Πλοῦτος

μέθεσθε νῦν μου πρῶτον.

Χρεμύλος
ἤν, μεθίεμεν.

Πλοῦτος

ἀκούετον δή: δεῖ γὰρ ὡς ἔοικέ με
λέγειν ἃ κρύπτειν ἦν παρεσκευασμένος.
ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι Πλοῦτος.

Χρεμύλος
ὦ μιαρώτατε
ἀνδρῶν ἁπάντων, εἶτ᾽ ἐσίγας Πλοῦτος ὤν; **Καρίων**

σὺ Πλοῦτος, οὕτως ἀθλίως διακείμενος;
ὦ Φοῖβ᾽ Ἄπολλον καὶ θεοὶ καὶ δαίμονες
καὶ Ζεῦ, τί φῄς; ἐκεῖνος ὄντως εἶ σύ; **Πλοῦτος**
ναί.

Χρεμύλος

ἐκεῖνος αὐτός;

Πλοῦτος
αὐτότατος.

Χρεμύλος
πόθεν οὖν φράσον

αὐχμῶν βαδίζεις; **Πλοῦτος**
ἐκ Πατροκλέους ἔρχομαι,
ὃς οὐκ ἐλούσατ᾽ ἐξ ὅτουπερ ἐγένετο.

Χρεμύλος

τουτὶ δὲ τὸ κακὸν πῶς ἔπαθες; κάτειπέ μοι.

Πλοῦτος

ὁ Ζεύς με ταῦτ᾽ ἔδρασεν ἀνθρώποις φθονῶν.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ὢν μειράκιον ἠπείλησ᾽ ὅτι
ὡς τοὺς δικαίους καὶ σοφοὺς καὶ κοσμίους
μόνους βαδιοίμην: ὁ δέ μ᾽ ἐποίησεν τυφλόν,
ἵνα μὴ διαγιγνώσκοιμι τούτων μηδένα.
οὕτως ἐκεῖνος τοῖσι χρηστοῖσι φθονεῖ.

Χρεμύλος

καὶ μὴν διὰ τοὺς χρηστούς γε τιμᾶται μόνους
καὶ τοὺς δικαίους.

Πλοῦτος
ὁμολογῶ σοι.

Χρεμύλος
φέρε τί οὖν;
εἰ πάλιν ἀναβλέψειας ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ,
φεύγοις ἂν ἤδη τοὺς πονηρούς; **Πλοῦτος**
φήμ᾽ ἐγώ.

Χρεμύλος

ὡς τοὺς δικαίους δ᾽ ἂν βαδίζοις;

Πλοῦτος
πάνυ μὲν οὖν:
πολλοῦ γὰρ αὐτοὺς οὐχ ἑόρακά πω χρόνου.

Χρεμύλος

καὶ θαῦμά γ᾽ οὐδέν: οὐδ᾽ ἐγὼ γὰρ ὁ βλέπων.

Πλοῦτος

ἄφετόν με νῦν. ἵστον γὰρ ἤδη τἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ.

Χρεμύλος

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἐξόμεσθά σου.

Πλοῦτος

οὐκ ἠγόρευον ὅτι παρέξειν πράγματα
ἐμέλλετόν μοι;

Χρεμύλος
καὶ σύ γ᾽ ἀντιβολῶ πιθοῦ,
καὶ μή μ᾽ ἀπολίπῃς: οὐ γὰρ εὑρήσεις ἐμοῦ
ζητῶν ἔτ᾽ ἄνδρα τοὺς τρόπους βελτίονα.

Καρίων

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἄλλος πλὴν ἐγώ.

Πλοῦτος

ταυτὶ λέγουσι πάντες: ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν δέ μου
τύχωσ᾽ ἀληθῶς καὶ γένωνται πλούσιοι,
ἀτεχνῶς ὑπερβάλλουσι τῇ μοχθηρίᾳ.

Χρεμύλος

ἔχει μὲν οὕτως, εἰσὶ δ᾽ οὐ πάντες κακοί.

Πλοῦτος

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἁπαξάπαντες.

Καρίων
οἰμώξει μακρά.

Χρεμύλος

σοὶ δ᾽ ὡς ἂν εἰδῇς ὅσα παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ἢν μένῃς
γενήσετ᾽ ἀγαθά, πρόσεχε τὸν νοῦν ἵνα πύθῃ.
οἶμαι γὰρ οἶμαι, σὺν θεῷ δ᾽ εἰρήσεται,
ταύτης ἀπαλλάξειν σε τῆς ὀφθαλμίας
βλέψαι ποιήσας.

Πλοῦτος
μηδαμῶς τοῦτ᾽ ἐργάσῃ.
οὐ βούλομαι γὰρ πάλιν ἀναβλέψαι.

Χρεμύλος
τί φῄς;

Καρίων

ἄνθρωπος οὗτός ἐστιν ἄθλιος φύσει.

Πλοῦτος

ὁ Ζεὺς † μὲν οὖν εἰδὼς τὰ τούτων μῶρ᾽ ἔμ᾽ εἰ†
πύθοιτ᾽ ἂν ἐπιτρίψειε.

Χρεμύλος
νῦν δ᾽ οὐ τοῦτο δρᾷ,
ὅστις σε προσπταίοντα περινοστεῖν ἐᾷ; **Πλοῦτος**

οὐκ οἶδ᾽: ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐκεῖνον ὀρρωδῶ πάνυ.

Χρεμύλος

ἆληθες ὦ δειλότατε πάντων δαιμόνων;
οἴει γὰρ εἶναι τὴν Διὸς τυραννίδα
καὶ τοὺς κεραυνοὺς ἀξίους τριωβόλου,
ἐὰν ἀναβλέψῃς σὺ κἂν σμικρὸν χρόνον; **Πλοῦτος**

ἆ μὴ λέγ᾽ ὦ πόνηρε ταῦτ᾽.

Χρεμύλος

ἔχ᾽ ἥσυχος.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀποδείξω σε τοῦ Διὸς πολὺ
μεῖζον δυνάμενον.

Πλοῦτος
ἐμὲ σύ; **Χρεμύλος**
νὴ τὸν οὐρανόν.
αὐτίκα γὰρ ἄρχει διὰ τίν᾽ ὁ Ζεὺς τῶν θεῶν; **Καρίων**

διὰ τἀργύριον: πλεῖστον γάρ ἐστ᾽ αὐτῷ.

Χρεμύλος
φέρε
τίς οὖν ὁ παρέχων ἐστὶν αὐτῷ τοῦθ᾽; **Καρίων**
ὁδί.

Χρεμύλος

θύουσι δ᾽ αὐτῷ διὰ τίν᾽; οὐ διὰ τουτονί;

Καρίων

καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ εὔχονταί γε πλουτεῖν ἄντικρυς.

Χρεμύλος

οὔκουν ὅδ᾽ ἐστὶν αἴτιος καὶ ῥᾳδίως
παύσειεν, εἰ βούλοιτο, ταῦτ᾽ ἄν; **Πλοῦτος**
ὅτι τί δή; **Χρεμύλος**

ὅτι οὐδ᾽ ἂν εἷς θύσειεν ἀνθρώπων ἔτι,
οὐ βοῦν ἄν, οὐχὶ ψαιστόν, οὐκ ἄλλ᾽ οὐδὲ ἕν,
μὴ βουλομένου σοῦ.

Πλοῦτος
πῶς; **Χρεμύλος**
ὅπως;
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως
ὠνήσεται δήπουθεν, ἢν σὺ μὴ παρὼν
αὐτὸς διδῷς πἀργύριον: ὥστε τοῦ Διὸς

τὴν δύνομιν, ἢν λυπῇ τι, καταλύσεις μόνος.

Πλοῦτος

τί λέγεις; δι᾽ ἐμὲ θύουσιν αὐτῷ;

Χρεμύλος
φήμ᾽ ἐγώ.
καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ εἴ τί γ᾽ ἔστι λαμπρὸν καὶ καλὸν
ἢ χαρίεν ἀνθρώποισι, διὰ σὲ γίγνεται.
ἅπαντα τῷ πλουτεῖν γάρ ἐσθ᾽ ὑπήκοα.

Καρίων

ἔγωγέ τοι διὰ μικρὸν ἀργυρίδιον
δοῦλος γεγένημαι, διὰ τὸ μὴ πλουτεῖν ἴσως.

Χρεμύλος

καὶ τάς γ᾽ ἑταίρας φασὶ τὰς Κορινθίας,
ὅταν μὲν αὐτάς τις πένης πειρῶν τύχῃ,
οὐδὲ προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν, ἐὰν δὲ πλούσιος,
τὸν πρωκτὸν αὐτὰς εὐθὺς ὡς τοῦτον τρέπειν.

Καρίων

καὶ τούς γε παῖδάς φασι ταὐτὸ τοῦτο δρᾶν
οὐ τῶν ἐραστῶν ἀλλὰ τἀργυρίου χάριν.

Χρεμύλος

οὐ τούς γε χρηστούς, ἀλλὰ τοὺς πόρνους: ἐπεὶ
αἰτοῦσιν οὐκ ἀργύριον οἱ χρηστοί.

Καρίων
τί δαί;

Χρεμύλος

ὁ μὲν ἵππον ἀγαθόν, ὁ δὲ κύνας θηρευτικάς.

Καρίων

αἰσχυνόμενοι γὰρ ἀργύριον αἰτεῖν ἴσως
ὀνόματι περιπέττουσι τὴν μοχθηρίαν.

Χρεμύλος

τέχναι δὲ πᾶσαι διὰ σὲ καὶ σοφίσματα
ἐν τοῖσιν ἀνθρώποισίν ἐσθ᾽ ηὑρημένα.
ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἡμῶν σκυτοτομεῖ καθήμενος: **Καρίων**

ἕτερος δὲ χαλκεύει τις, ὁ δὲ τεκταίνεται:

Χρεμύλος

ὁ δὲ χρυσοχοεῖ γε χρυσίον παρὰ σοῦ λαβών:

Καρίων

ὁ δὲ λωποδυτεῖ γε νὴ Δί᾽, ὁ δὲ τοιχωρυχεῖ:

Χρεμύλος

ὁ δὲ γναφεύει γ᾽:

Καρίων
ὁ δέ γε πλύνει κῴδια:

Χρεμύλος

ὁ δὲ βυρσοδεψεῖ γ᾽:

Καρίων
ὁ δέ γε πωλεῖ κρόμμυα:

Χρεμύλος

ὁ δ᾽ ἁλούς γε μοιχὸς διὰ σέ που παρατίλλεται.

Πλοῦτος

οἴμοι τάλας ταυτί μ᾽ ἐλάνθανεν πάλαι.

Καρίων

μέγας δὲ βασιλεὺς οὐχὶ διὰ τοῦτον κομᾷ;

Χρεμύλος

ἐκκλησία δ᾽ οὐχὶ διὰ τοῦτον γίγνεται;

Καρίων

τί δέ; τὰς τριήρεις οὐ σὺ πληροῖς; εἰπέ μοι.

Χρεμύλος

τὸ δ᾽ ἐν Κορίνθῳ ξενικὸν οὐχ οὗτος τρέφει;

Καρίων

ὁ Πάμφιλος δ᾽ οὐχι διὰ τοῦτον κλαύσεται;

Χρεμύλος

ὁ βελονοπώλης δ᾽ οὐχὶ μετὰ τοῦ Παμφίλου;

Καρίων

Ἀγύρριος δ᾽ οὐχὶ διὰ τοῦτον πέρδεται;

Χρεμύλος

Φιλέψιος δ᾽ οὐχ ἕνεκα σοῦ μύθους λέγει;

Καρίων

ἡ ξυμμαχία δ᾽ οὐ διὰ σὲ τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις;

Χρεμύλος

ἐρᾷ δὲ Λαῒς οὐ διὰ σὲ Φιλωνίδου;

Καρίων

ὁ Τιμοθέου δὲ πύργος —

Χρεμύλος
ἐμπέσοι γέ σοι.
τὰ δὲ πράγματ᾽ οὐχὶ διὰ σὲ πάντα πράττεται;
μονώτατος γὰρ εἶ σὺ πάντων αἴτιος
καὶ τῶν κακῶν καὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν, εὖ ἴσθ᾽ ὅτι.

Καρίων

κρατοῦσι γοῦν κἀν τοῖς πολέμοις ἑκάστοτε,
ἐφ᾽ οἷς οὗτος ἐπικαθέζηται μόνον.

Πλοῦτος

ἐγὼ τοσαῦτα δυνατός εἰμ᾽ εἷς ὢν ποιεῖν;

Χρεμύλος

καὶ ναὶ μὰ Δία τούτων γε πολλῷ πλείονα:
ὥστ᾽ οὐδὲ μεστὸς σοῦ γέγον᾽ οὐδεὶς πώποτε.
τῶν μὲν γὰρ ἄλλων ἐστὶ πάντων πλησμονή,
ἔρωτος

Καρίων
ἄρτων

Χρεμύλος
μουσικῆς

Καρίων
τραγημάτων

Χρεμύλος

τιμῆς

Καρίων

πλακούντων

Χρεμύλος
ἀνδραγαθίας

Καρίων
ἰσχάδων

Χρεμύλος

φιλοτιμίας

Καρίων
μάζης

Χρεμύλος
στρατηγίας

Καρίων
φακῆς:

Χρεμύλος

σοῦ δ᾽ ἐγένετ᾽ οὐδεὶς μεστὸς οὐδεπώποτε.
ἀλλ᾽ ἢν τάλαντά τις λάβῃ τριακαίδεκα,
πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐπιθυμεῖ λαβεῖν ἑκκαίδεκα:
κἂν ταῦτ᾽ ἀνύσηται, τετταράκοντα βούλεται,
ἢ φησιν εἶν ἀβίωτον αὐτῷ τὸν βίον.

Πλοῦτος

εὖ τοι λέγειν ἔμοιγε φαίνεσθον πάνυ:
πλὴν ἓν μόνον δέδοικα.

Χρεμύλος
φράζε τοῦ πέρι;

Πλοῦτος

ὅπως ἐγὼ τὴν δύναμιν ἣν ὑμεῖς φατε

ἔχειν με, ταύτης δεσπότης γενήσομαι.

Χρεμύλος

νὴ τὸν Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ καὶ λέγουσι πάντες ὡς
δειλότατόν ἐσθ᾽ ὁ Πλοῦτος.

Πλοῦτος
ἥκιστ᾽, ἀλλά με
τοιχωρύχος τις διέβαλ᾽. ἐσδὺς γάρ ποτε
οὐκ εἶχεν ἐς τὴν οἰκίαν οὐδὲν λαβεῖν,
εὑρὼν ἁπαξάπαντα κατακεκλῃμένα:
εἶτ᾽ ὠνόμασέ μου τὴν πρόνοιαν δειλίαν.

Χρεμύλος

μή νυν μελέτω σοι μηδέν: ὡς ἐὰν γένῃ
ἀνὴρ πρόθυμος αὐτὸς ἐς τὰ πράγματα,
βλέποντ᾽ ἀποδείξω σ᾽ ὀξύτερον τοῦ Λυγκέως.

Πλοῦτος

πῶς οὖν δυνήσει τοῦτο δρᾶσαι θνητὸς ὤν;

Χρεμύλος

ἔχω τιν᾽ ἀγαθὴν ἐλπίδ᾽ ἐξ ὧν εἶπέ μοι
ὁ Φοῖβος αὐτὸς Πυθικὴν σείσας δάφνην.

Πλοῦτος

κἀκεῖνος οὖν σύνοιδε ταῦτα;

Χρεμύλος
φήμ᾽ ἐγώ.

Πλοῦτος

ὁρᾶτε.

Χρεμύλος
μὴ φρόντιζε μηδὲν ὦγαθέ.
ἐγὼ γάρ, εὖ τοῦτ᾽ ἴσθι, κεἰ δεῖ μ᾽ ἀποθανεῖν,
αὐτὸς διαπράξω ταῦτα.

Καρίων
κἂν βούλῃ γ᾽, ἐγώ.

Χρεμύλος

πολλοὶ δ᾽ ἔσονται χἄτεροι νῷν ξύμμαχοι,
ὅσοις δικαίοις οὖσιν οὐκ ἦν ἄλφιτα.

Πλοῦτος

παπαῖ πονηρούς γ᾽ εἶπας ἡμῖν συμμάχους.

Χρεμύλος

οὐκ ἦν γε πλουτήσωσιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς πάλιν.
ἀλλ᾽ ἴθι σὺ μὲν ταχέως δραμών —

Καρίων
τί δρῶ; λέγε.

Χρεμύλος

τοὺς ξυγγεώργους κάλεσον, εὑρήσεις δ᾽ ἴσως
ἐν τοῖς ἀγροῖς αὐτοὺς ταλαιπωρουμένους,
ὅπως ἂν ἴσον ἕκαστος ἐνταυθοῖ παρὼν
ἡμῖν μετάσχῃ τοῦδε τοῦ Πλούτου μέρος.

Καρίων

καὶ δὴ βαδίζω: τουτοδὶ τὸ κρεᾴδιον
τῶν ἔνδοθέν τις εἰσενεγκάτω λαβών.

Χρεμύλος

ἐμοὶ μελήσει τοῦτό γ᾽: ἀλλ᾽ ἀνύσας τρέχε.

σὺ δ᾽ ὦ κράτιστε Πλοῦτε πάντων δαιμόνων
εἴσω μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ δεῦρ᾽ εἴσιθ᾽: ἡ γὰρ οἰκία
αὕτη ‘στὶν ἣν δεῖ χρημάτων σε τήμερον
μεστὴν ποιῆσαι καὶ δικαίως κἀδίκως.

Πλοῦτος

ἀλλ᾽ ἄχθομαι μὲν εἰσιὼν νὴ τοὺς θεούς
εἰς οἰκίαν ἑκάστοτ᾽ ἀλλοτρίαν πάνυ:
ἀγαθὸν γὰρ ἀπέλαυσ᾽ οὐδὲν αὐτοῦ πώποτε.
ἢν μὲν γὰρ ὡς φειδωλὸν εἰσελθὼν τύχω,
εὐθὺς κατώρυξέν με κατὰ τῆς γῆς κάτω:
κἄν τις προσέλθῃ χρηστὸς ἄνθρωπος φίλος
αἰτῶν λαβεῖν τι σμικρὸν ἀργυρίδιον,
ἔξαρνός ἐστι μηδ᾽ ἰδεῖν με πώποτε.
ἢν δ᾽ ὡς παραπλῆγ᾽ ἄνθρωπον εἰσελθὼν τύχω,
πόρναισι καὶ κύβοισι παραβεβλημένος
γυμνὸς θύραζ᾽ ἐξέπεσον ἐν ἀκαρεῖ χρόνου.

Χρεμύλος

μετρίου γὰρ ἀνδρὸς οὐκ ἐπέτυχες πώποτε.
ἐγὼ δὲ τούτου τοῦ τρόπου πώς εἰμ᾽ ἀεί,
χαίρω τε γὰρ φειδόμενος ὡς οὐδεὶς ἀνὴρ
πάλιν τ᾽ ἀναλῶν, ἡνίκ᾽ ἂν τούτου δέῃ.
ἀλλ᾽ εἰσίωμεν, ὡς ἰδεῖν σε βούλομαι
καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μόνον,
ὃν ἐγὼ φιλῶ μάλιστα μετὰ σέ.

Πλοῦτος
πείθομαι.

Χρεμύλος

τί γὰρ ἄν τις οὐχὶ πρὸς σὲ τἀληθῆ λέγοι;

Καρίων

ὦ πολλὰ δὴ τῷ δεσπότῃ ταὐτὸν θύμον φαγόντες,
ἄνδρες φίλοι καὶ δημόται καὶ τοῦ πονεῖν ἐρασταί,

ἴτ᾽ ἐγκονεῖτε σπεύδεθ᾽, ὡς ὁ καιρὸς οὐχὶ μέλλειν,
ἀλλ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτῆς τῆς ἀκμῆς, ᾗ δεῖ παρόντ᾽ ἀμύνειν.

Χορός

οὔκουν ὁρᾷς ὁρμωμένους ἡμᾶς πάλαι προθύμως,
ὡς εἰκός ἐστιν ἀσθενεῖς γέροντας ἄνδρας ἤδη;
σὺ δ᾽ ἀξιοῖς ἴσως με θεῖν, πρὶν ταῦτα καὶ φράσαι μοι
ὅτου χάριν μ᾽ ὁ δεσπότης ὁ σὸς κέκληκε δῦρο.

Καρίων

οὔκουν πάλαι δήπου λέγω; σὺ δ᾽ αὐτὸς οὐκ ἀκούεις.
ὁ δεσπότης γάρ φησιν ὑμᾶς ἡδέως ἅπαντας
ψυχροῦ βίου καὶ δυσκόλου ζήσειν ἀπαλλαγέντας.

Χορός

ἔστιν δὲ δὴ τί καὶ πόθεν τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦθ᾽ ὅ φησιν;

Καρίων

ἔχων ἀφῖκται δεῦρο πρεσβύτην τιν᾽ ὦ πόνηροι
ῥυπῶντα κυφὸν ἄθλιον ῥυσὸν μαδῶντα νωδόν:
οἶμαι δὲ νὴ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ψωλὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι.

Χορός

ὦ χρυσὸν ἀγγείλας ἐπῶν πῶς φῄς; πάλιν φράσον μοι.
δηλοῖς γὰρ αὐτὸν σωρὸν ἥκειν χρημάτων ἔχοντα.

Καρίων

πρεσβυτικῶν μὲν οὖν κακῶν ἔγωγ᾽ ἔχοντα σωρόν.

Χορός

μῶν ἀξιοῖς φενακίσας ἔπειτ᾽ ἀπαλλαγῆναι
ἀζήμοις, καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἐμοῦ βακτηρίαν ἔχοντος; **Καρίων**

πάντως γὰρ ἄνθρωπον φύσει τοιοῦτον ἐς τὰ πάντα
ἡγεῖσθέ μ᾽ εἶναι κοὐδὲν ἂν νομίζεθ᾽ ὑγιὲς εἰπεῖν; **Χορός**

ὡς σεμνὸς οὐπίτριπτος: αἱ κνῆμαι δέ σου βοῶσιν
‘ἰοὺ ἰού,’ τὰς χοίνικας καὶ τὰς πέδας ποθοῦσαι.

Καρίων

ἐν τῇ σορῷ νυνὶ λαχὸν τὸ γράμμα σου δικάζειν,
σὺ δ᾽ οὐ βαδίζεις, ὁ δὲ Χάρων τὸ ξύμβολον δίδωσιν.

Χορός

διαρραγείης, ὡς μόθων εἶ καὶ φύσει κόβαλος,
ὅστις φενακίζεις, φράσαι δ᾽ οὔπω τέτληκας ἡμῖν,
οἳ πολλὰ μοχθήσαντες οὐκ οὔσης σχολῆς προθύμως
δεῦρ᾽ ἤλθομεν, πολλῶν θύμων ῥίζας διεκπερῶντες.

Καρίων

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ἂν κρύψαιμι. τὸν Πλοῦτον γὰρ ὧνδρες ἥκει
ἄγων ὁ δεσπότης, ὃς ὑμᾶς πλουσίους ποιήσει.

Χορός

ὄντως γὰρ ἔστι πλουσίοις ἡμῖν ἅπασιν εἶναι;

Καρίων

νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς Μίδαις μὲν οὖν, ἢν ὦτ᾽ ὄνου λάβητε.

Χορός

ὡς ἥδομαι καὶ τέρπομαι καὶ βούλομαι χορεῦσαι
ὑφ᾽ ἡδονῆς, εἴπερ λέγεις ὄντως σὺ ταῦτ᾽ ἀληθῆ.

Καρίων

καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ βουλήσομαι θρεττανελὸ τὸν Κύκλωπα
μιμούμενος καὶ τοῖν ποδοῖν ὠδὶ παρενσαλεύων

ὑμᾶς ἄγειν. ἀλλ᾽ εἶα τέκεα θαμίν᾽ ἐπαναβοῶντες
βληχώμενοί τε προβατίων
αἰγῶν τε κιναβρώντων μέλη
ἔπεσθ᾽ ἀπεψωλημένοι: τράγοι δ᾽ ἀκρατιεῖσθε. **Χορός**

ἡμεῖς δέ γ᾽ αὖ ζητήσομεν θρεττανελὸ τὸν Κύκλωπα
βληχώμενοι, σὲ τουτονὶ πεινῶντα καταλαβόντες,
πήραν ἔχοντα λάχανά τ᾽ ἄγρια δροσερά, κραιπαλῶντα
ἡγούμενον τοῖς προβατίοις,
εἰκῇ δὲ καταδαρθόντα που
μέγαν λαβόντες ἡμμένον σφηκίσκον ἐκτυφλῶσαι. **Καρίων**

ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν Κίρκην γε τὴν τὰ φάρμακ᾽ ἀνακυκῶσαν,
ἣ τοὺς ἑταίρους τοῦ Φιλωνίδου ποτ᾽ ἐν Κορίνθῳ
ἔπεισεν ὡς ὄντας κάπρους
μεμαγμένον σκῶρ ἐσθίειν, αὐτὴ δ᾽ ἔματτεν αὐτοῖς,
μιμήσομαι πάντας τρόπους:
ὑμεῖς δὲ γρυλίζοντες ὑπὸ φιληδίας
ἔπεσθε μητρὶ χοῖροι. **Χορός**

οὐκοῦν σε τὴν Κίρκην γε τὴν τὰ φάρμακ᾽ ἀνακυκῶσαν
καὶ μαγγανεύουσαν μολύνουσάν τε τοὺς ἑταίρους
λαβόντες ὑπὸ φιληδίας
τὸν Λαρτίου μιμούμενοι τῶν ὄρχεων κρεμῶμεν,
μινθώσομέν θ᾽ ὥσπερ τράγου
τὴν ῥῖνα: σὺ δ᾽ Ἀρίστυλλος ὑποχάσκων ἐρεῖς,
ἔπεσθε μητρὶ χοῖροι. **Καρίων**

ἀλλ᾽ εἶα νῦν τῶν σκωμμάτων ἀπαλλαγέντες ἤδη
ὑμεῖς ἐπ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ εἶδος τρέπεσθ᾽,
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἰὼν ἤδη λάθρᾳ
βουλήσομαι τοῦ δεσπότου
λαβών τιν᾽ ἄρτον καὶ κρέας
μασώμενος τὸ λοιπὸν οὕτω τῷ κόπῳ ξυνεῖναι. *Χοροῦ*

Χρεμύλος

χαίρειν μὲν ὑμᾶς ἐστιν ὦνδρες δημόται
ἀρχαῖον ἤδη προσαγορεύειν καὶ σαπρόν:

ἀσπάζομαι δ᾽ ὁτιὴ προθύμως ἥκετε
καὶ συντεταμένως κοὐ κατεβλακευμένως.
ὅπως δέ μοι καὶ τἄλλα συμπαραστάται
ἔσεσθε καὶ σωτῆρες ὄντως τοῦ θεοῦ.

Χορός

θάρρει: βλέπειν γὰρ ἄντικρυς δόξεις μ᾽ Ἄρη.
δεινὸν γὰρ εἰ τριωβόλου μὲν οὕνεκα
ὠστιζόμεσθ᾽ ἑκάστοτ᾽ ἐν τἠκκλησίᾳ,
αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν Πλοῦτον παρείην τῳ λαβεῖν.

Χρεμύλος

καὶ μὴν ὁρῶ καὶ Βλεψίδημον τουτονὶ
προσιόντα: δῆλος δ᾽ ἐστὶν ὅτι τοῦ πράγματος
ἀκήκοέν τι τῇ βαδίσει καὶ τῷ τάχει.

Βλεψίδημος

τί ἂν οὖν τὸ πρᾶγμ᾽ εἴη; πόθεν καὶ τίνι τρόπῳ
Χρεμύλος πεπλούτηκ᾽ ἐξαπίνης; οὐ πείθομαι.
καίτοι λόγος γ᾽ ἦν νὴ τὸν Ἡρακλέα πολὺς
ἐπὶ τοῖσι κουρείοισι τῶν καθημένων,
ὡς ἐξαπίνης ἀνὴρ γεγένηται πλούσιος.
ἔστιν δέ μοι τοῦτ᾽ αὐτὸ θαυμάσιον, ὅπως
χρηστόν τι πράττων τοὺς φίλους μεταπέμπεται.
οὔκουν ἐπιχώριόν γε πρᾶγμ᾽ ἐργάζεται.

Χρεμύλος

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν ἀποκρύψας ἐρῶ: νὴ τοὺς θεούς
ὦ Βλεψίδημ᾽ ἄμεινον ἢ χθὲς πράττομεν,
ὥστε μετέχειν ἔξεστιν: εἶ γὰρ τῶν φίλων.

Βλεψίδημος

γέγονας δ᾽ ἀληθῶς, ὡς λέγουσι, πλούσιος;

Χρεμύλος

ἔσομαι μὲν οὖν αὐτίκα μάλ᾽, ἢν θεὸς θέλῃ.
ἔνι γάρ τις ἔνι κίνδυνος ἐν τῷ πράγματι.

Βλεψίδημος

ποῖός τις;

Χρεμύλος
οἷος;

Βλεψίδημος
λέγ᾽ ἀνύσας ὅ τι φῄς ποτε.

Χρεμύλος

ἢν μὲν κατορθώσωμεν, εὖ πράττειν ἀεί:
ἢν δὲ σφαλῶμεν, ἐπιτετρῖφθαι τὸ παράπαν.

Βλεψίδημος

τουτὶ πονηρὸν φαίνεται τὸ φορτίον
καί μ᾽ οὐκ ἀρέσκει. τό τε γὰρ ἐξαίφνης ἄγαν
οὕτως ὑπερπλουτεῖν τό τ᾽ αὖ δεδοικέναι
πρὸς ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲν ὑγιές ἐστ᾽ εἰργασμένου.

Χρεμύλος

πῶς οὐδὲν ὑγιές;

Βλεψίδημος
εἴ τι κεκλοφὼς νὴ Δία
ἐκεῖθεν ἥκεις ἀργύριον ἢ χρυσίον
παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, κἄπειτ᾽ ἴσως σοι μεταμέλει.

Χρεμύλος

Ἄπολλον ἀποτρόπαιε μὰ Δί᾽ ἐγὼ μὲν οὔ.

Βλεψίδημος

παῦσαι φλυαρῶν ὦγάθ᾽: οἶδα γὰρ σαφῶς.

Χρεμύλος

σὺ μηδὲν εἰς ἔμ᾽ ὑπονόει τοιουτονί.

Βλεψίδημος

φεῦ,
ὡς οὐδὲν ἀτεχνῶς ὑγιές ἐστιν οὐδενός,
ἀλλ᾽ εἰσὶ τοῦ κέρδους ἅπαντες ἥττονες.

Χρεμύλος

οὔ τοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρ᾽ ὑγιαίνειν μοι δοκεῖς.

Βλεψίδημος

ὡς πολὺ μεθέστηχ᾽ ὧν πρότερον εἶχεν τρόπων.

Χρεμύλος

μελαγχολᾷς ὦνθρωπε νὴ τὸν οὐρανόν.

Βλεψίδημος

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ τὸ βλέμμ᾽ αὐτὸ κατὰ χώραν ἔχει,
ἀλλ᾽ ἐστὶν ἐπίδηλόν τι πεπανουργηκότι.

Χρεμύλος

σὺ μὲν οἶδ᾽ ὃ κρώζεις: ὡς ἐμοῦ τι κεκλοφότος
ζητεῖς μεταλαβεῖν.

Βλεψίδημος
μεταλαβεῖν ζητῶ; τίνος;

Χρεμύλος

τὸ δ᾽ ἐστὶν οὐ τοιοῦτον ἀλλ᾽ ἑτέρως ἔχον.

Βλεψίδημος

μῶν οὐ κέκλοφας ἀλλ᾽ ἥρπακας;

Χρεμύλος
κακοδαιμονᾷς.

Βλεψίδημος

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ μὴν ἀπεστέρηκάς γ᾽ οὐδένα;

Χρεμύλος

ου᾽ δῆτ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽.

Βλεψίδημος
ὦ Ἡράκλεις, φέρε ποῖ τις ἂν
τράποιτο; τἀληθὲς γὰρ οὐκ ἐθέλει φράσαι.

Χρεμύλος

κατηγορεῖς γὰρ πρὶν μαθεῖν τὸ πρᾶγμά μου.

Βλεψίδημος

ὦ τᾶν ἐγώ τοι τοῦτ᾽ ἀπὸ σμικροῦ πάνυ
ἐθέλω διαπρᾶξαι πρὶν πυθέσθαι τὴν πόλιν,
τὸ στόμ᾽ ἐπιβύσας κέρμασιν τῶν ῥητόρων.

Χρεμύλος

καὶ μὴν φίλως γ᾽ ἄν μοι δοκεῖς νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς
τρεῖς μνᾶς ἀναλώσας λογίσασθαι δώδεκα.

Βλεψίδημος

ὁρῶ τιν᾽ ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος καθεδούμενον
ἱκετηρίαν ἔχοντα μετὰ τῶν παιδίων
καὶ τῆς γυναικός, κου᾽ διοίσοντ᾽ ἄντικρυς
τῶν Ἡρακλειδῶν οὐδ᾽ ὁτιοῦν τῶν Παμφίλου.

Χρεμύλος

οὐκ ὦ κακόδαιμον, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς μόνους
ἔγωγε καὶ τοὺς δεξιοὺς καὶ σώφρονας
ἀπαρτὶ πλουτῆσαι ποιήσω.

Βλεψίδημος
τί σὺ λέγεις;
οὕτω πάνυ πολλὰ κέκλοφας; **Χρεμύλος**
οἴμοι τῶν κακῶν,
ἀπολεῖς.

Βλεψίδημος
σὺ μὲν οὖν σεαυτόν, ὥς γ᾽ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς.

Χρεμύλος

οὐ᾽ δῆτ᾽, ἐπεὶ τὸν Πλοῦτον ὦ μόχθηρε σὺ
ἔχω.

Βλεψίδημος
σὺ Πλοῦτον; ποῖον;

Χρεμύλος
αὐτὸν τὸν θεόν.

Βλεψίδημος

καὶ ποῦ ‘στιν;

Χρεμύλος
ἔνδον.

Βλεψίδημος
ποῦ;

Χρεμύλος
παρ᾽
ἐμοί.

Βλεψίδημος
παρὰ σοί;

Χρεμύλος
πάνυ.

Βλεψίδημος

οὐκ ἐς κόρακας; Πλοῦτος παρὰ σοί;

Χρεμύλος
νὴ τοὺς θεούς.

Βλεψίδημος

395 λὲγεις ἀληθῆ;

Χρεμύλος
φημί.

Βλεψίδημος
πρὸς τῆς Ἑστίας;

Χρεμύλος

νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ.

Βλεψίδημος
τὸν θαλάττιον λέγεις;

Χρεμύλος

εἰ δ᾽ ἔστιν ἕτερός τις Ποσειδῶν, τὸν ἕτερον.

Βλεψίδημος

εἶτ᾽ οὐ διαπέμπεις καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς τοὺς φίλους;

Χρεμύλος

οὐκ ἔστι πω τὰ πράγματ᾽ ἐν τούτῳ.

Βλεψίδημος
τί φῄς;
οὐ τῷ μεταδοῦναι; **Χρεμύλος**
μὰ Δία. δεῖ γὰρ πρῶτα

Βλεψίδημος
τί;

Χρεμύλος

βλέψαι ποιῆσαι νώ —

Βλεψίδημος
τίνα βλέψαι; φράσον.

Χρεμύλος

τὸν Πλοῦτον ὥσπερ πρότερον ἐνί γέ τῳ τρόπῳ.

Βλεψίδημος

τυφλὸς γὰρ ὄντως ἐστί;

Χρεμύλος
νὴ τὸν οὐρανόν.

Βλεψίδημος

οὐκ ἐτὸς ἄρ᾽ ὡς ἔμ᾽ ἦλθεν οὐδεπώποτε.

Χρεμύλος

ἀλλ᾽ ἢν θεοὶ θέλωσι, νῦν ἀφίξεται.

Βλεψίδημος

οὔκουν ἰατρὸν εἰσάγειν ἐχρῆν τινά;

Χρεμύλος

τίς δῆτ᾽ ἰατρός ἐστι νῦν ἐν τῇ πόλει;
οὔτε γὰρ ὁ μισθὸς οὐδὲν ἔστ᾽ οὔθ᾽ ἡ τέχνη.

Βλεψίδημος

σκοπῶμεν.

Χρεμύλος
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔστιν.

Βλεψίδημος
οὐδ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ.

Χρεμύλος

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ὅπερ πάλαι παρεσκευαζόμην
ἐγώ, κατακλίνειν αὐτὸν εἰς Ἀσκληπιοῦ
κράτιστόν ἐστι.

Βλεψίδημος
πολὺ μὲν οὖν νὴ τοὺς θεούς.
μή νυν διάτριβ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἄνυε πράττων ἕν γέ τι.

Χρεμύλος

καὶ δὴ βαδίζω.

Βλεψίδημος
σπεῦδέ νυν.

Χρεμύλος
τοῦτ᾽ αὐτὸ δρῶ.

Πενία

ὦ θερμὸν ἔργον κἀνόσιον καὶ παράνομον
τολμῶντε δρᾶν ἀνθρωπαρίω κακοδαίμονε —
ποῖ ποῖ; τί φεύγετον; οὐ μενεῖτον; **Βλεψίδημος**

Ἡράκλεις.

Πενία

ἐγὼ γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἐξολῶ κακοὺς κακῶς:
τόλμημα γὰρ τολμᾶτον οὐκ ἀνασχετόν,
ἀλλ᾽ οἷον οὐδεὶς ἄλλος οὐδεπώποτε
οὔτε θεὸς οὔτ᾽ ἄνθρωπος: ὥστ᾽ ἀπολώλατον.

Χρεμύλος

σὺ δ᾽ εἶ τίς; ὠχρὰ μὲν γὰρ εἶναί μοι δοκεῖς.

Βλεψίδημος

ἴσως Ἐρινύς ἐστιν ἐκ τραγῳδίας:
βλέπει γέ τοι μανικόν τι καὶ τραγῳδικόν.

Χρεμύλος

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔχει γὰρ δᾷδας.

Βλεψίδημος
οὐκοῦν κλαύσεται.

Πενία

ὄιεσθε δ᾽ εἶναι τίνα με;

Χρεμύλος
πανδοκεύτριαν
ἢ λεκιθόπωλιν. οὐ γὰρ ἂν τοσουτονὶ
ἀνέκραγες ἡμῖν οὐδὲν ἠδικημένη.

Πενία

ἄληθες; οὐ γὰρ δεινότατα δεδράκατον
ζητοῦντες ἐκ πάσης με χώρας ἐκβαλεῖν; **Χρεμύλος**

οὔκουν ὑπόλοιπον τὸ βάραθρόν σοι γίγνεται;

ἀλλ᾽ ἥτις εἶ λέγειν σ᾽ ἐχρῆν αὐτίκα μάλα.

Πενία

ἢ σφὼ ποιήσω τήμερον δοῦναι δίκην
ἀνθ᾽ ὧν ἐμὲ ζητεῖτον ἐνθένδ᾽ ἀφανίσαι.

Βλεψίδημος

ἆρ᾽ ἐστὶν ἡ καπηλὶς ἡκ τῶν γειτόνων,
ἢ ταῖς κοτύλαις ἀεί με διαλυμαίνεται; **Πενία**

Πενία μὲν οὖν, ἢ σφῷν ξυνοικῶ πόλλ᾽ ἔτη.

Βλεψίδημος

ἄναξ Ἄπολλον καὶ θεοί, ποῖ τις φύγῃ;

Χρεμύλος

οὗτος τί δρᾷς; ὦ δειλότατον σὺ θηρίον:
οὐ παραμενεῖς;

Βλεψίδημος
ἥκιστα πάντων.

Χρεμύλος
οὐ μενεῖς;
ἀλλ᾽ ἄνδρε δύο γυναῖκα φεύγομεν μίαν; **Βλεψίδημος**

Πενία γάρ ἐστιν ὦ πόνηρ᾽, ἧς οὐδαμοῦ
οὐδὲν πέφυκε ζῷον ἐξωλέστερον.

Χρεμύλος

στῆθ᾽, ἀντιβολῶ σε, στῆθι.

Βλεψίδημος
μὰ Δί᾽ ἐγὼ μὲν οὔ.

Χρεμύλος

καὶ μὴν λέγω, δεινότατον ἔργον παρὰ πολὺ
ἔργων ἁπάντων ἐργασόμεθ᾽, εἰ τὸν θεὸν
ἔρημον ἀπολιπόντε ποι φευξούμεθα
τηνδὶ δεδιότε, μηδὲ διαμαχούμεθα.

Βλεψίδημος

ποίοις ὅπλοισιν ἢ δυνάμει πεποιθότες;
ποῖον γὰρ οὐ θώρακα, ποίαν δ᾽ ἀσπίδα
οὐκ ἐνέχυρον τίθησιν ἡ μιαρωτάτη; **Χρεμύλος**

θάρρει: μόνος γὰρ ὁ θεὸς οὗτος οἶδ᾽ ὅτι
τροπαῖον ἂν στήσαιτο τῶν ταύτης τρόπων.

Πενία

γρύζειν δὲ καὶ τολμᾶτον ὦ καθάρματε,
ἐπ᾽ αὐτοφώρῳ δεινὰ δρῶντ᾽ εἰλημμένω; **Χρεμύλος**

σὺ δ᾽ ὦ κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολουμένη τί λοιδορεῖ
ἡμῖν προσελθοῦσ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὁτιοῦν ἀδικουμένη;

Πενία

οὐδὲν γὰρ ὦ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν νομίζετε
ἀδικεῖν με τὸν Πλοῦτον ποιεῖν πειρωμένω
βλέψαι πάλιν; **Χρεμύλος**
τί οὖν ἀδικοῦμεν τοῦτό σε,
εἰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποισιν ἐκπορίζομεν
ἀγαθόν; **Πενία**
τί δ᾽ ἂν ὑμεῖς ἀγαθὸν ἐξεύροιθ᾽;

Χρεμύλος
ὅ τι;
σὲ πρῶτον ἐκβαλόντες ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος.

Πενία

ἔμ᾽ ἐκβαλόντες; καὶ τί ἂν νομίζετον
κακὸν ἐργάσασθαι μεῖζον ἀνθρώπους; **Χρεμύλος**
ὅ τι;
εἰ τοῦτο δρᾶν μέλλοντες ἐπιλαθοίμεθα.

Πενία

καὶ μὴν περὶ τούτου σφῷν ἐθέλω δοῦναι λόγον
τὸ πρῶτον αὐτοῦ: κἂν μὲν ἀποφήνω μόνην
ἀγαθῶν ἁπάντων οὖσαν αἰτίαν ἐμὲ
ὑμῖν δι᾽ ἐμέ τε ζῶντας ὑμᾶς: εἰ δὲ μή,
ποιεῖτον ἤδη τοῦθ᾽ ὅ τι ἂν ὑμῖν δοκῇ.

Χρεμύλος

ταυτὶ σὺ τολμᾷς ὦ μιαρωτάτη λέγειν;

Πενία

καὶ σύ γε διδάσκου: πάνυ γὰρ οἶμαι ῥᾳδίως
ἅπανθ᾽ ἁμαρτάνοντά σ᾽ ἀποδείξειν ἐγώ,
εἰ τοὺς δικαίους φῂς ποιήσειν πλουσίους.

Χρεμύλος

ὦ τύμπανα καὶ κύφωνες οὐκ ἀρήξετε;

Πενία

οὐ δεῖ σχετλιάζειν καὶ βοᾶν πρὶν ἂν μάθῃς.

Χρεμύλος

καὶ τίς δύναιτ᾽ ἂν μὴ βοᾶν ‘ἰοὺ ἰοὺ’
τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀκούων;

Πενία
ὅστις ἐστὶν εὖ φρονῶν.

Χρεμύλος

τί δῆτά σοι τίμημ᾽ ἐπιγράψω τῇ δίκῃ,
ἐὰν ἁλῷς;

Πενία
ὅ τι σοι δοκεῖ.

Χρεμύλος
καλῶς λέγεις.

Πενία

τὸ γὰρ αὖτ᾽, ἐὰν ἡττᾶσθε, καὶ σφὼ δεῖ παθεῖν.

Χρεμύλος

ἱκανοὺς νομίζεις δῆτα θανάτους εἴκοσιν;

Βλεψίδημος

ταύτῃ γε: νῷν δὲ δὖ ἀποχρήσουσιν μόνω.

Πενία

οὐκ ἂν φθάνοιτον τοῦτο πράττοντ᾽, ἢ τί γ᾽ ἂν
ἔχοι τις ἂν δίκαιον ἀντειπεῖν ἔτι; **Χορός**

ἀλλ᾽ ἤδη χρῆν τι λέγειν ὑμᾶς σοφὸν ᾧ νικήσετε τηνδὶ
ἐν τοῖσι λόγοις ἀντιλέγοντες, μαλακὸν δ᾽ ἐνδώσετε μηδέν. **Χρεμύλος**

φανερὸν μὲν ἔγωγ᾽ οἶμαι γνῶναι τοῦτ᾽ εἶναι πᾶσιν ὁμοίως,
ὅτι τοὺς χρηστοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὖ πράττειν ἐστὶ δίκαιον,
τοὺς δὲ πονηροὺς καὶ τοὺς ἀθέους τούτων τἀναντία δήπου.
τοῦτ᾽ οὖν ἡμεῖς ἐπιθυμοῦντες μόλις ηὕρομεν, ὥστε γενέσθαι
βούλευμα καλὸν καὶ γενναῖον καὶ χρήσιμον εἰς ἅπαν ἔργον.
ἦν γὰρ ὁ Πλοῦτος νυνὶ βλέψῃ καὶ μὴ τυφλὸς ὢν περινοστῇ,
ὡς τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων βαδιεῖται κοὐκ ἀπολείψει,
τοὺς δὲ πονηροὺς καὶ τοὺς ἀθέους φευξεῖται: κᾆτα ποιήσει
πάντας χρηστοὺς καὶ πλουτοῦντας δήπου τά τε θεῖα σέβοντας.
καίτοι τούτου τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τίς ἂν ἐξεύροι ποτ᾽ ἄμεινον; **Βλεψίδημος**

οὐδείς: τούτου μάρτυς ἐγώ σοι: μηδὲν ταύτην γ᾽ ἀνερώτα.

Χρεμύλος

ὡς μὲν γὰρ νῦν ἡμῖν ὁ βίος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις διάκειται,
τίς ἂν οὐχ ἡγοῖτ᾽ εἶναι μανίαν κακοδαιμονίαν τ᾽ ἔτι μᾶλλον;
πολλοὶ μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὄντες πλουτοῦσι πονηροί,
ἀδίκως αὐτὰ ξυλλεξάμενοι: πολλοὶ δ᾽ ὄντες πάνυ χρηστοὶ
πράττουσι κακῶς καὶ πεινῶσιν μετὰ σοῦ τε τὰ πλεῖστα σύνεισιν.
οὔκουν εἶναί φημ᾽, εἰ παύσει ταύτην βλέψας ποθ᾽ ὁ Πλοῦτος,
ὁδὸν ἥντιν᾽ ἰὼν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀγάθ᾽ ἄν μείζω πορίσειεν.

Πενία

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ πάντων ῥᾷστ᾽ ἀνθρώπων ἀναπεισθέντ᾽ οὐχ ὑγιαίνειν
δύο πρεσβύτα, ξυνθιασώτα τοῦ ληρεῖν καὶ παραπαίειν,
εἰ τοῦτο γένοιθ᾽ ὃ ποθεῖθ᾽ ὑμεῖς, οὔ φημ᾽ ἂν λυσιτελεῖν σφῷν.
εἰ γὰρ ὁ Πλοῦτος βλέψειε πάλιν διανείμειέν τ᾽ ἴσον αὐτόν,
οὔτε τέχνην ἂν τῶν ἀνθρώπων οὔτ᾽ ἂν σοφίαν μελετῴη
οὐδείς: ἀμφοῖν δ᾽ ὑμῖν τούτοιν ἀφανισθέντοιν ἐθελήσει
τίς χαλκεύειν ἢ ναυπηγεῖν ἢ ῥάπτειν ἢ τροχοποιεῖν,
ἢ σκυτοτομεῖν ἢ πλινθουργεῖν ἢ πλύνειν ἢ σκυλοδεψεῖν,
ἢ γῆς ἀρότροις ῥήξας δάπεδον καρπὸν Δηοῦς θερίσασθαι,
ἢν ἐξῇ ζῆν ἀργοῖς ὑμῖν πάντων ἀμελοῦσιν; **Χρεμύλος**

λῆρον ληρεῖς. ταῦτα γὰρ ἡμῖν πάνθ᾽ ὅσα νῦν δὴ κατέλεξας
οἱ θεράποντες μοχθήσουσιν.

Πενία
πόθεν οὖν ἕξεις θεράποντας;

Χρεμύλος

ὠνησόμεθ᾽ ἀργυρίου δήπου.

Πενία
τίς δ᾽ ἔσται πρῶτον ὁ πωλῶν,
ὅταν ἀργύριον κἀκεῖνος ἔχῃ; **Χρεμύλος**
κερδαίνειν βουλόμενός τις
ἔμπορος ἥκων ἐκ Θετταλίας παρὰ πλείστων ἀνδραποδιστῶν.

Πενία

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἔσται πρῶτον ἁπάντων οὐδεὶς οὐδ᾽ ἀνδραποδιστὴς
κατὰ τὸν λόγον ὃν σὺ λέγεις δήπου. τίς γὰρ πλουτῶν ἐθελήσει
κινδυνεύων περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς αὐτοῦ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι;
ὥστ᾽ αὐτὸς ἀροῦν ἐπαναγκασθεὶς καὶ σκάπτειν τἄλλα τε μοχθεῖν
ὀδυνηρότερον τρίψεις βίοτον πολὺ τοῦ νῦν.

Χρεμύλος
ἐς κεφαλὴν σοί.

Πενία

ἔτι δ᾽ οὐχ ἕξεις οὔτ᾽ ἐν κλίνῃ καταδαρθεῖν, οὐ γὰρ ἔσονται,
οὔτ᾽ ἐν δάπισιν: τίς γὰρ ὑφαίνειν ἐθελήσει χρυσίου ὄντος;
οὔτε μύροισιν μυρίσαι στακτοῖς ὁπόταν νύμφην ἀγάγησθον.
οὔθ᾽ ἱματίων βαπτῶν δαπάναις κοσμῆσαι ποικιλομόρφων.
καίτοι τί πλέον πλουτεῖν ἐστιν τούτων πάντων ἀποροῦντας;
παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ δ᾽ ἔστιν ταῦτ᾽ εὔπορα πάνθ᾽ ὑμῖν ὧν δείσθον: ἐγὼ γὰρ
τὸν χειροτέχνην ὥσπερ δέσποιν᾽ ἐπαναγκάζουσα κάθημαι
διὰ τὴν χρείαν καὶ τὴν πενίαν ζητεῖν ὁπόθεν βίον ἕξει.

Χρεμύλος

σὺ γὰρ ἂν πορίσαι τί δύναι᾽ ἀγαθὸν φῴδων ἐκ βαλανείου
καὶ παιδαρίων ὑποπεινώντων καὶ γραι:δίων κολοσυρτόν;
φθειρῶν τ᾽ ἀριθμὸν καὶ κωνώπων καὶ ψυλλῶν οὐδὲ λέγω σοι
ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους, αἳ βομβοῦσαι περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀνιῶσιν,
ἐπεγείρουσαι καὶ φράζουσαι, ‘πεινήσεις, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπανίστω.’
πρὸς δέ γε τούτοις ἀνθ᾽ ἱματίου μὲν ἔχειν ῥάκος: ἀντὶ δὲ κλίνης
στιβάδα σχοίνων κόρεων μεστήν, ἣ τοὺς εὕδοντας ἐγείρει:
καὶ φορμὸν ἔχειν ἀντὶ τάπητος σαπρόν: ἀντὶ δὲ προσκεφαλαίου
λίθον ἐυμεγέθη πρὸς τῇ κεφαλῇ: σιτεῖσθαι δ᾽ ἀντὶ μὲν ἄρτων
μαλάχης πτόρθους, ἀντὶ δὲ μάζης φυλλεῖ᾽ ἰσχνῶν ῥαφανίδων,
ἀντὶ δὲ θράνους στάμνου κεφαλὴν κατεαγότος, ἀντὶ δὲ μάκτρας
φιδάκνης πλευρὰν ἐρρωγυῖαν καὶ ταύτην. ἆρά γε πολλῶν
ἀγαθῶν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀποφαίνω σ᾽ αἴτιον οὖσαν; **Πενία**

σὺ μὲν οὐ τὸν ἐμὸν βίον εἴρηκας, τὸν τῶν πτωχῶν δ᾽ ὑπεκρούσω.

Χρεμύλος

οὐκοῦν δήπου τῆς Πτωχείας Πενίαν φαμὲν εἶναι ἀδελφήν.

Πενία

ὑμεῖς γ᾽ οἵπερ καὶ Θρασυβούλῳ Διονύσιον εἶναι ὅμοιον.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ οὑμὸς τοῦτο πέπονθεν βίος οὐ μὰ Δί᾽, οὐδέ γε μέλλει.
πτωχοῦ μὲν γὰρ βίος, ὃν σὺ λέγεις, ζῆν ἐστιν μηδὲν ἔχοντα:
τοῦ δὲ πένητος ζῆν φειδόμενον καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις προς ἔχοντα,
περιγίγνεσθαι δ᾽ αὐτῷ μηδέν, μὴ μέντοι μηδ᾽ ἐπιλείπειν.

Χρεμύλος

ὡς μακαρίτην ὦ Δάματερ τὸν βίον αὐτοῦ κατέλεξας,
εἰ φεισάμενος καὶ μοχθήσας καταλείψει μηδὲ ταφῆναι.

Πενία

σκώπτειν πειρᾷ καὶ κωμῳδεῖν τοῦ σπουδάζειν ἀμελήσας,
οὐ γιγνώσκων ὅτι τοῦ Πλούτου παρέχω βελτίονας ἄνδρας
καὶ τὴν γνώμην καὶ τὴν ἰδέαν. παρὰ τῷ μὲν γὰρ ποδαγρῶντες
καὶ γαστρώδεις καὶ παχύκνημοι καὶ πίονές εἰσιν ἀσελγῶς,
παρ᾽ ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ἰσχνοὶ καὶ σφηκώδεις καὶ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἀνιαροί.

Χρεμύλος

ἀπὸ τοῦ λιμοῦ γὰρ ἴσως αὐτοῖς τὸ σφηκῶδες σὺ πορίζεις.

Πενία

περὶ σωφροσύνης ἤδη τοίνυν περανῶ σφῷν κἀναδιδάξω
ὅτι κοσμιότης οἰκεῖ μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ, τοῦ Πλούτου δ᾽ ἐστὶι ὑβρίζειν.

Χρεμύλος

πάνυ γοῦν κλέπτειν κόσμιόν ἐστιν καὶ τοὺς τοίχους διορύττειν.

Βλεψίδημος

†νὴ τὸν Δί᾽, εἰ δεῖ λαθεῖν αὐτόν, πῶς οὐχὶ κόσμιόν ἐστι;†

Πενία

σκέψαι τοίνυν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν τοὺς ῥήτορας, ὡς ὁπόταν μὲν
ὦσι πένητες, περὶ τὸν δῆμον καὶ τὴν πόλιν εἰσὶ δίκαιοι,
πλουτήσαντες δ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶν κοινῶν παραχρῆμ᾽ ἄδικοι γεγένηνται,
ἐπιβουλεύουσί τε τῷ πλήθει καὶ τῷ δήμῳ πολεμοῦσιν.

Χρεμύλος

ἀλλ᾽ οὐ ψεύδει τούτων γ᾽ οὐδέν, καίπερ σφόδρα βάσκανος οὖσα.
ἀτὰρ οὐχ ἧττόν γ᾽ οὐδὲν κλαύσει, μηδὲν ταύτῃ γε κομήσῃς,
ὁτιὴ ζητεῖς τοῦτ᾽ ἀναπείθειν ἡμᾶς, ὡς ἔστιν ἄμεινον
Πενία Πλούτου.

Πενία
καὶ σύ γ᾽ ἐλέγξαι μ᾽ οὔπω δύνασαι περὶ τούτου,
ἀλλὰ φλυαρεῖς καὶ πτερυγίζεις.

Χρεμύλος
καὶ πῶς φεύγουσί σ᾽ ἅπαντες;

Πενία

ὅτι βελτίους αὐτοὺς ποιῶ. σκέψασθαι δ᾽ ἔστι μάλιστα
ἀπὸ τῶν παίδων: τοὺς γὰρ πατέρας φεύγουσι φρονοῦντας ἄριστα
αὐτοῖς. οὕτω διαγιγνώσκειν χαλεπὸν πρᾶγμ᾽ ἐστὶ δίκαιον.

Χρεμύλος

τὸν Δία φήσεις ἆρ᾽ οὐκ ὀρθῶς διαγιγνώσκειν τὸ κράτιστον:
κἀκεῖνος γὰρ τὸν Πλοῦτον ἔχει.

Βλεψίδημος
ταύτην δ᾽ ἡμῖν ἀποπέμπει.

Πενία

ἀλλ᾽ ὦ Κρονικαῖς λήμαις ὄντως λημῶντες τὰς φρένας ἄμφω,

ὁ Ζεὺς δήπου πένεται, καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἤδη φανερῶς σε διδάξω.
εἰ γὰρ ἐπλούτει, πῶς ἂν ποιῶν τὸν Ὀλυμπικὸν αὐτὸς ἀγῶνα
ἵνα τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἅπαντας ἀεὶ δι᾽ ἔτους πέμπτου ξυναγείρει,
ἀνεκήρυττεν τῶν ἀσκητῶν τοὺς νικῶντας στεφανώσας
κοτίνου στεφάνῳ; καίτοι χρυσῷ μᾶλλον ἐχρῆν, εἴπερ ἐπλούτει.

Χρεμύλος

οὐκοῦν τούτῳ δήπου δηλοῖ τιμῶν τὸν Πλοῦτον ἐκεῖνος:
φειδόμενος γὰρ καὶ βουλόμενος τούτου μηδὲν δαπανᾶσθαι,
λήροις ἀναδῶν τοὺς νικῶντας τὸν Πλοῦτον ἐᾷ παρ᾽ ἑαυτῷ.

Πενία

πολὺ τῆς Πενίας πρᾶγμ᾽ αἴσχιον ζητεῖς αὐτῷ περιάψαι,
εἰ πλούσιος ὢν ἀνελεύθερός ἐσθ᾽ οὑτωσὶ καὶ φιλοκερδής.

Χρεμύλος

ἀλλὰ σέ γ᾽ ὁ Ζεὺς ἐξολέσειεν κοτίνου στεφάνῳ στεφανώσας.

Πενία

τὸ γὰρ ἀντιλέγειν τολμᾶν ὑμᾶς ὡς οὐ πάντ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἀγάθ᾽ ὑμῖν
διὰ τὴν Πενίαν.

Χρεμύλος
παρὰ τῆς Ἑκάτης ἔξεστιν τοῦτο πυθέσθαι,
εἴτε τὸ πλουτεῖν εἴτε τὸ πεινῆν βέλτιον. φησὶ γὰρ αὕτη
τοὺς μὲν ἔχοντας καὶ πλουτοῦντας δεῖπνον κατὰ μῆν᾽ ἀποπέμπειν,
τοὺς δὲ πένητας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἁρπάζειν πρὶν καταθεῖναι.

Χρεμύλος

ἀλλὰ φθείρου καὶ μὴ γρύξῃς
ἔτι μηδ᾽ ὁτιοῦν.
οὐ γὰρ πείσεις, οὐδ᾽ ἢν πείσῃς.

Πενία

ὦ πόλις Ἄργους, κλύεθ᾽ οἷα λέγει.

Χρεμύλος

Παύσωνα κάλει τὸν ξύσσιτον.

Πενία

τί πάθω τλήμων;

Χρεμύλος

ἔρρ᾽ ἐς κόρακας θᾶττον ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν.

Πενία

605 εἶμι δὲ ποῖ γῆς;

Χρεμύλος

ἐς τὸν κύφων᾽: ἀλλ᾽ οὐ μέλλειν
χρῆν σ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἀνύειν.

Πενία

ἦ μὴν ὑμεῖς γ᾽ ἔτι μ᾽ ἐνταυθοῖ
μεταπέμψεσθον.

Χρεμύλος

610 τότε νοστήσεις: νῦν δὲ φθείρου.
κρεῖττον γάρ μοι πλουτεῖν ἐστίν,
σὲ δ᾽ ἐᾶν κλάειν μακρὰ τὴν κεφαλήν.

Βλεψίδημος

νὴ Δί᾽ ἐγὼ γοῦν ἐθέλω πλουτῶν
εὐωχεῖσθαι μετὰ τῶν παίδων
615 τῆς τε γυναικός, καὶ λουσάμενος
λιπαρὸς χωρῶν ἐκ βαλανείου

τῶν χειροτεχνῶν
καὶ τῆς Πενίας καταπαρδεῖν.

Χρεμύλος

αὕτη μὲν ἡμῖν ἡπίτριπτος οἴχεται.
ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ σύ γ᾽ ὡς τάχιστα τὸν θεὸν
ἐγκατακλινοῦντ᾽ ἄγωμεν εἰς Ἀσκληπιοῦ.

Βλεψίδημος

καὶ μὴ διατρίβωμέν γε, μὴ πάλιν τις αὖ
ἐλθὼν διακωλύσῃ τι τῶν προὔργου ποιεῖν.

Χρεμύλος

παῖ Καρίων τὰ στρώματ᾽ ἐκφέρειν σ᾽ ἐχρῆν
αὐτόν τ᾽ ἄγειν τὸν Πλοῦτον, ὡς νομίζεται,
καὶ τἄλλ᾽ ὅσ᾽ ἐστὶν ἔνδον ηὐτρεπισμένα.

Χοροῦ

Καρίων

ὦ πλεῖστα Θησείοις μεμυστιλημένοι
γέροντες ἄνδρες ἐπ᾽ ὀλιγίστοις ἀλφίτοις,
ὡς εὐτυχεῖθ᾽, ὡς μακαρίως πεπράγατε,
ἄλλοι θ᾽ ὅσοις μέτεστι τοῦ χρηστοῦ τρόπου.

Χορός

τί δ᾽ ἔστιν ὦ βέλτιστε τῶν σαυτοῦ φίλων;
φαίνει γὰρ ἥκειν ἄγγελος χρηστοῦ τινος.

Καρίων

ὁ δεσπότης πέπραγεν εὐτυχέστατα,
μᾶλλον δ᾽ ὁ Πλοῦτος αὐτός: ἀντὶ γὰρ τυφλοῦ
ἐξωμμάτωται καὶ λελάμπρυνται κόρας,
Ἀσκληπιοῦ παιῶνος εὐμενοῦς τυχών.

Χορός

λέγεις μοι χαράν, λέγεις μοι βοάν.

Καρίων

πάρεστι χαίρειν, ἤν τε βούλησθ᾽ ἤν τε μή.

Χορός

ἀναβοάσομαι τὸν εὔπαιδα καὶ
μέγα βροτοῖσι φέγγος Ἀσκληπιόν.

Γυνή

τίς ἡ βοή ποτ᾽ ἐστίν; ἆρ᾽ ἀγγέλλεται
χρηστόν τι; τοῦτο γὰρ ποθοῦσ᾽ ἐγὼ πάλαι
ἔνδον κάθημαι περιμένουσα τουτονί.

Καρίων

ταχέως ταχέως φέρ᾽ οἶνον ὦ δέσποιν᾽, ἵνα
καὐτὴ πίῃς: φιλεῖς δὲ δρῶσ᾽ αὐτὸ σφόδρα:
ὡς ἀγαθὰ συλλήβδην ἅπαντά σοι φέρω.

Γυνή

καὶ ποῦ στιν;

Καρίων
ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις εἴσει τάχα.

Γυνή

πέραινε τοίνυν ὅ τι λέγεις ἀνύσας ποτέ.

Καρίων

ἄκουε τοίνυν, ὡς ἐγὼ τὰ πράγματα
ἐκ τῶν ποδῶν ἐς τὴν κεφαλήν σοι πάντ᾽ ἐρῶ.

Γυνή

μὴ δῆτ᾽ ἔμοιγ᾽ ἐς τὴν κεφαλήν.

Καρίων
μὴ τἀγαθὰ
ἃ νῦν γεγένηται;

Γυνή
μὴ μὲν οὖν τὰ πράγματα.

Καρίων

ὡς γὰρ τάχιστ᾽ ἀφικόμεθα πρὸς τὸν θεὸν
ἄγοντες ἄνδρα τότε μὲν ἀθλιώτατον
νῦν δ᾽ εἴ τιν᾽ ἄλλον μακάριον κεὐδαίμονα,
πρῶτον μὲν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ θάλατταν ἤγομεν,
ἔπειτ᾽ ἐλοῦμεν.

Γυνή
νὴ Δί᾽ εὐδαίμων ἄρ᾽ ἦν
ἀνὴρ γέρων ψυχρᾷ θαλάττῃ λούμενος.

Καρίων

ἔπειτα πρὸς τὸ τέμενος ᾖμεν τοῦ θεοῦ.
ἐπεὶ δὲ βωμῷ πόπανα καὶ προθύματα
καθωσιώθη πέλανος Ἡφαίστου φλογί,
κατεκλίναμεν τὸν Πλοῦτον, ὥσπερ εἰκὸς ἦν:
ἡμῶν δ᾽ ἕκαστος στιβάδα παρεκαττύετο.

Γυνή

ἦσαν δέ τινες κἄλλοι δεόμενοι τοῦ θεοῦ;

Καρίων

εἷς μέν γε Νεοκλείδης, ὅς ἐστι μὲν τυφλός,
κλέπτων δὲ τοὺς βλέποντας ὑπερηκόντικεν:
ἕτεροί τε πολλοὶ παντοδαπὰ νοσήματα

ἔχοντες: ὡς δὲ τοὺς λύχνους ἀποσβέσας
ἡμῖν παρήγγειλεν καθεύδειν τοῦ θεοῦ
ὁ πρόπολος, εἰπών, ἤν τις αἴσθηται ψόφου
σιγᾶν, ἅπαντες κοσμίως κατεκείμεθα.
κἀγὼ καθεύδειν οὐκ ἐδυνάμην, ἀλλά με
ἀθάρης χύτρα τις ἐξέπληττε κειμένη
ὀλίγον ἄπωθεν τῆς κεφαλῆς του γρᾳδίου,
ἐφ᾽ ἣν ἐπεθύμουν δαιμονίως ἐφερπύσαι.
ἔπειτ᾽ ἀναβλέψας ὁρῶ τὸν ἱερέα
τοὺς φθοῖς ἀφαρπάζοντα καὶ τὰς ἰσχάδας
ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τῆς ἱερᾶς: μετὰ τοῦτο δὲ
περιῆλθε τοὺς βωμοὺς ἅπαντας ἐν κύκλῳ,
εἴ που πόπανον εἴη τι καταλελειμμένον:
ἔπειτα ταῦθ᾽ ἥγιζεν ἐς σάκταν τινά.
κἀγὼ νομίσας πολλὴν ὁσίαν τοῦ πράγματος
ἐπὶ τὴν χύτραν τῆς ἀθάρης ἀνίσταμαι.

Γυνή

ταλάντατ᾽ ἀνδρῶν οὐκ ἐδεδοίκεις τὸν θεόν;

Καρίων

νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς ἔγωγε μὴ φθάσειέ με
ἐπὶ τὴν χύτραν ἐλθὼν ἔχων τὰ στέμματα:
ὁ γὰρ ἱερεὺς αὐτοῦ με προὐδιδάξατο.
τὸ γρᾴδιον δ᾽ ὡς ᾔσθετο δή μου τὸν ψόφον,
ἄρασ᾽ ὑφῄρει: κᾆτα συρίξας ἐγὼ
ὀδὰξ ἐλαβόμην ὡς παρείας ὢν ὄφις.
ἡ δ᾽ εὐθέως τὴν χεῖρα πάλιν ἀνέσπασεν,
κατέκειτο δ᾽ αὐτὴν ἐντυλίξασ᾽ ἡσυχῇ
ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους βδέουσα δριμύτερον γαλῆς.
κἀγὼ τότ᾽ ἤδη τῆς ἀθάρης πολλὴν ἔφλων:
ἔπειτ᾽ ἐπειδὴ μεστὸς ἦν, ἀνεπαλλόμην.

Γυνή

ὁ δὲ θεὸς ὑμῖν οὐ προσῄειν;

Καρίων
οὐδέπω.
μετὰ τοῦτο δ᾽ ἤδη καὶ γέλοιον δῆτά τι
ἐποίησα. προσιόντος γὰρ αὐτοῦ μέγα πάνυ
ἀπέπαρδον: ἡ γαστὴρ γὰρ ἐπεφύσητό μου.

Γυνή

ἦ πού σε διὰ τοῦτ᾽ εὐθὺς ἐβδελύττετο.

Καρίων

οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ Ἰασὼ μέν τις ἀκολουθοῦσ᾽ ἅμα
ὑπηρυθρίασε χἠ Πανάκει᾽ ἀπεστράφη
τὴν ῥῖν᾽ ἐπιλαβοῦσ᾽: οὐ λιβανωτὸν γὰρ βδέω.

Γυνή

αὐτὸς δ᾽ ἐκεῖνος;

Καρίων
οὐ μὰ Δί᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἐφρόντισεν.

Γυνή

λέγεις ἄγροικον ἄρα σύ γ᾽ εἶναι τὸν θεόν.

Καρίων

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐκ ἔγωγ᾽, ἀλλὰ σκατοφάγον.

Γυνή
αἲ τάλαν.

Καρίων

μετὰ ταῦτ᾽ ἐγὼ μὲν εὐθὺς ἐνεκαλυψάμην
δείσας, ἐκεῖνος δ᾽ ἐν κύκλῳ τὰ νοσήματα
σκοπῶν περιῄει πάντα κοσμίως πάνυ.
ἔπειτα παῖς αὐτῷ λίθινον θυείδιον

παρέθηκε καὶ δοίδυκα καὶ κιβώτιον.

Γυνή

λίθινον;

Καρίων
μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ δῆτ᾽ οὐχὶ τό γε κιβώτιον.

Γυνή

σὺ δὲ πῶς ἑώρας ὦ κάκιστ᾽ ἀπολούμενε,
ὃς ἐγκεκαλύφθαι φῄς;

Καρίων
διὰ τοῦ τριβωνίου:
ὀπὰς γὰρ εἶχεν οὐκ ὀλίγας μὰ τὸν Δία.
πρῶτον δὲ πάντων τῷ Νεοκλείδῃ φάρμακον
καταπλαστὸν ἐνεχείρησε τρίβειν, ἐμβαλὼν
σκορόδων κεφαλὰς τρεῖς Τηνίων. ἔπειτ᾽ ἔφλα
ἐν τῇ θυείᾳ συμπαραμιγνύων ὀπὸν
καὶ σχῖνον: εἶτ᾽ ὄξει διέμενος Σφηττίῳ
κατέπλασεν αὐτοῦ τὰ βλέφαρ᾽ ἐκστρέψας, ἵνα
ὀδυνῷτο μᾶλλον. ὁ δὲ κεκραγὼς καὶ βοῶν
ἔφευγ᾽ ἀνᾴξας: ὁ δὲ θεὸς γελάσας ἔφη:
‘ἐνταῦθα νῦν κάθησο καταπεπλασμένος,
ἵν᾽ ὑπομνύμενον παύσω σε τὰς ἐκκλησίας.’

Γυνή

ὡς φιλόπολίς τίς ἐσθ᾽ ὁ δαίμων καὶ σοφός.

Καρίων

μετὰ τοῦτο τῷ Πλούτωνι παρεκαθέζετο,
καὶ πρῶτα μὲν δὴ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐφήψατο,
ἔπειτα καθαρὸν ἡμιτύβιον λαβὼν
τὰ βλέφαρα περιέψησεν: ἡ Πανάκεια δὲ
κατεπέτασ᾽ αὐτοῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν φοινικίδι
καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρόσωπον: εἶθ᾽ ὁ θεὸς ἐπόππυσεν.

ἐξῃξάτην οὖν δύο δράκοντ᾽ ἐκ τοῦ νεὼ
ὑπερφυεῖς τὸ μέγεθος.

Γυνή
ὦ φίλοι θεοί.

Καρίων

τούτω δ᾽ ὑπὸ τὴν φοινικίδ᾽ ὑποδύνθ᾽ ἡσυχῇ
τὰ βλέφαρα περιέλειχον, ὥς γ᾽ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ:
καὶ πρίν σε κοτύλας ἐκπιεῖν οἴνου δέκα,
ὁ Πλοῦτος ὦ δέσποιν᾽ ἀνειστήκει βλέπων:
ἐγὼ δὲ τὼ χεῖρ᾽ ἀνεκρότησ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ἡδονῆς
τὸν δεσπότην τ᾽ ἤγειρον. ὁ θεὸς δ᾽ εὐθέως
ἠφάνισεν αὐτὸν οἵ τ᾽ ὄφεις ἐς τὸν νεών.
οἱ δ᾽ ἐγκατακείμενοι παρ᾽ αὐτῷ πῶς δοκεῖς
τὸν Πλοῦτον ἠσπάζοντο καὶ τὴν νύχθ᾽ ὅλην
ἐγρηγόρεσαν, ἕως διέλαμψεν ἡμέρα.
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐπῄνουν τὸν θεὸν πάνυ σφόδρα,
ὅτι βλέπειν ἐποίησε τὸν Πλοῦτον ταχύ,
τὸν δὲ Νεοκλείδην μᾶλλον ἐποίησεν τυφλόν.

Γυνή

ὅσην ἔχεις τὴν δύναμιν ὦναξ δέσποτα.
ἀτὰρ φράσον μοι, ποῦ᾽ σθ᾽ ὁ Πλοῦτος;

Καρίων
ἔρχεται.
ἀλλ᾽ ἦν περὶ αὐτὸν ὄχλος ὑπερφυὴς ὅσος.
οἱ γὰρ δίκαιοι πρότερον ὄντες καὶ βίον
ἔχοντες ὀλίγον αὐτὸν ἠσπάζοντο καὶ
ἐδεξιοῦνθ᾽ ἅπαντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς:
ὅσοι δ᾽ ἐπλούτουν οὐσίαν τ᾽ εἶχον συχνὴν
οὐκ ἐκ δικαίου τὸν βίον κεκτημένοι,
ὀφρῦς ξυνῆγον ἐσκυθρώπαζόν θ᾽ ἅμα.
οἱ δ᾽ ἠκολούθουν κατόπιν ἐστεφανωμένοι
γελῶντες εὐφημοῦντες: ἐκτυπεῖτο δὲ
ἐμβὰς γερόντων εὐρύθμοις προβήμασιν.

ἀλλ᾽ εἶ᾽ ἀπαξάπαντες ἐξ ἑνὸς λόγου
ὀρχεῖσθε καὶ σκιρτᾶτε καὶ χορεύετε:
οὐδεὶς γὰρ ὑμῖν εἰσιοῦσιν ἀγγελεῖ,
ὡς ἄλφιτ᾽ οὐκ ἔνεστιν ἐν τῷ θυλάκῳ.

Γυνή

νὴ τὴν Ἑκάτην κἀγὼ δ᾽ ἀναδῆσαι βούλομαι
εὐαγγέλιά σε κριβανωτῶν ὁρμαθῷ
τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀπαγγείλαντα.

Καρίων
μή νυν μέλλ᾽ ἔτι,
ὡς ἄνδρες ἐγγύς εἰσιν ἤδη τῶν θυρῶν.

Γυνή

φέρε νυν ἰοῦσ᾽ εἴσω κομίσω καταχύσματα
ὥσπερ νεωνήτοισιν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐγώ.

Καρίων

ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀπαντῆσαί γ᾽ ἐκείνοις βούλομαι.

Κομμάτιον Χοροῦ

Πλοῦτος

καὶ προσκυνῶ γε πρῶτα μὲν τὸν ἥλιον,
ἔπειτα σεμνῆς Παλλάδος κλεινὸν πέδον
χώραν τε πᾶσαν Κέκροπος ἥ μ᾽ ἐδέξατο.
αἰσχύνομαι δὲ τὰς ἐμαυτοῦ συμφοράς,
οἵοις ἄρ᾽ ἀνθρώποις ξυνὼν ἐλάνθανον,
τοὺς ἀξίους δὲ τῆς ἐμῆς ὁμιλίας
ἔφευγον, εἰδὼς οὐδέν: ὦ τλήμων ἐγώ,
ὡς οὔτ᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ ἄρ᾽ οὔτε ταῦτ᾽ ὀρθῶς ἔδρων:
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὰ πάντα πάλιν ἀναστρέψας ἐγὼ
δείξω τὸ λοιπὸν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὅτι
ἄκων ἐμαυτὸν τοῖς πονηροῖς ἐπεδίδουν.

Χρεμύλος

βάλλ᾽ ἐς κόρακας: ὡς χαλεπόν εἰσιν οἱ φίλοι
οἱ φαινόμενοι παραχρῆμ᾽ ὅταν πράττῃ τις εὖ.
νύττουσι γὰρ καὶ φλῶσι τἀντικνήμια,
ἐνδεικνύμενος ἕκαστος εὔνοιάν τινα.
ἐμὲ γὰρ τίς οὐ προσεῖπε; ποῖος οὐκ ὄχλος
περιεστεφάνωσεν ἐν ἀγορᾷ πρεσβυτικός; **Γυνή**

ὦ φίλτατ᾽ ἀνδρῶν καὶ σὺ καὶ σὺ χαίρετε.
φέρε νυν, νόμος γάρ ἐστι, τὰ καταχύσματα
ταυτὶ καταχέω σου λαβοῦσα.

Πλοῦτος
μηδαμῶς.
ἐμοῦ γὰρ εἰσιόντος ἐς τὴν οἰκίαν
πρώτιστα καὶ βλέψαντος οὐδὲν ἐκφέρειν
πρεπῶδές ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐσφέρειν.

Γυνή

εἶτ᾽ οὐχὶ δέξει δῆτα τὰ καταχύσματα;

Πλοῦτος

ἔνδον γε παρὰ τὴν ἑστίαν, ὥσπερ νόμος:
ἔπειτα καὶ τὸν φόρτον ἐκφύγοιμεν ἄν.
οὐ γὰρ πρεπῶδές ἐστι τῷ διδασκάλῳ
ἰσχάδια καὶ τρωγάλια τοῖς θεωμένοις
προβαλόντ᾽ ἐπὶ τούτοις εἶτ᾽ ἀναγκάζειν γελᾶν.

Γυνή

εὖ πάνυ λέγεις: ὡς Δεξίνικός γ᾽ οὑτοσὶ
ἀνίσταθ᾽ ὡς ἁρπασόμενος τὰς ἰσχάδας.

Χοροῦ

Καρίων

ὡς ἡδὺ πράττειν ὦνδρές ἐστ᾽ εὐδαιμόνως,
καὶ ταῦτα μηδὲν ἐξενεγκόντ᾽ οἴκοθεν.
ἡμῖν γὰρ ἀγαθῶν σωρὸς ἐς τὴν οἰκίαν
ἐπεσπέπαικεν οὐδὲν ἠδικηκόσιν.
οὕτω τὸ πλουτεῖν ἐστιν ἡδὺ πρᾶγμα δή.
ἡ μὲν σιπύη μεστή ‘στι λευκῶν ἀλφίτων,
οἱ δ᾽ ἀμφορῆς οἴνου μέλανος ἀνθοσμίου.
ἅπαντα δ᾽ ἡμῖν ἀργυρίου καὶ χρυσίου
τὰ σκευάρια πλήρη ‘στίν, ὥστε θαυμάσαι.
τὸ φρέαρ δ᾽ ἐλαίου μεστόν: αἱ δὲ λήκυθοι
μύρου γέμουσι, τὸ δ᾽ ὑπερῷον ἰσχάδων.
ὀξὶς δὲ πᾶσα καὶ λοπάδιον καὶ χύτρα
χαλκῆ γέγονε: τοὺς δὲ πινακίσκους τοὺς σαπροὺς
τοὺς ἰχθυηροὺς ἀργυροῦς πάρεσθ᾽ ὁρᾶν.
ὁ δ᾽ ἰπνὸς γέγον᾽ ἡμῖν ἐξαπίνης ἐλεφάντινος.
στατῆρσι δ᾽ οἱ θεράποντες ἀρτιάζομεν
χρυσοῖς: ἀποψώμεσθα δ᾽ οὐ λίθοις ἔτι,
ἀλλὰ σκοροδίοις ὑπὸ τρυφῆς ἑκάστοτε.
καὶ νῦν ὁ δεσπότης μὲν ἔνδον βουθυτεῖ
ὗν καὶ τράγον καὶ κριὸν ἐστεφανωμένος:
ἐμὲ δ᾽ ἐξέπεμψεν ὁ καπνός. οὐχ οἷός τε γὰρ
ἔνδον μένειν ἦν. ἔδακνε γὰρ τὰ βλέφαρά μου.

Δίκαιος

ἔπου μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ παιδάριον, ἵνα πρὸς τὸν θεὸν
ἴωμεν.

Καρίων
ἔα τίς ἔσθ᾽ ὁ προσιὼν οὑτοσί;

Δίκαιος

ἀνὴρ πρότερον μὲν ἄθλιος, νῦν δ᾽ εὐτυχής.

Καρίων

δῆλον ὅτι τῶν χρηστῶν τις, ὡς ἔοικας, εἶ.

Δίκαιος

μάλιστ᾽.

Καρίων
ἔπειτα τοῦ δέει;

Δίκαιος
πρὸς τὸν θεὸν
ἥκω: μεγάλων γάρ μοὐστὶν ἀγαθῶν αἴτιος.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἱκανὴν οὐσίαν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς
λαβὼν ἐπήρκουν τοῖς δεομένοις τῶν φίλων,
εἶναι νομίζων χρήσιμον πρὸς τὸν βίον.

Καρίων

ἦ πού σε ταχέως ἐπέλιπεν τὰ χρήματα.

Δίκαιος

κομιδῇ μὲν οὖν.

Καρίων
οὐκοῦν μετὰ ταῦτ᾽ ἦσθ᾽ ἄθλιος.

Δίκαιος

κομιδῇ μὲν οὖν. κἀγὼ μὲν ᾤμην οὓς τέως
εὐηργέτησα δεομένους ἕξειν φίλους
ὄντως βεβαίους, εἰ δεηθείην ποτέ:
οἱ δ᾽ ἐξετρέποντο κοὐκ ἐδόκουν ὁρᾶν μ᾽ ἔτι.

Καρίων

καὶ κατεγέλων δ᾽ εὖ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι.

Δίκαιος
κομιδῇ μὲν οὖν:
αὐχμὸς γὰρ ὢν τῶν σκευαρίων μ᾽ ἀπώλεσεν.

Καρίων

ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ νῦν.

Δίκαιος
ἀνθ᾽ ὧν ἐγὼ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν
προσευξόμενος ἥκω δικαίως ἐνθάδε.

Καρίων

τὸ τριβώνιον δὲ τί δύναται πρὸς τῶν θεῶν,
ὃ φέρει μετὰ σοῦ τὸ παιδάριον τουτί; φράσον.

Δίκαιος

καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἀναθήσων ἔρχομαι πρὸς τὸν θεόν.

Καρίων

μῶν οὖν ἐμυήθης δῆτ᾽ ἐν αὐτῷ τὰ μεγάλα;

Δίκαιος

οὐκ ἀλλ᾽ ἐνερρίγωσ᾽ ἔτη τριακαίδεκα.

Καρίων

τὰ δ᾽ ἐμβάδια;

Δίκαιος
καὶ ταῦτα συνεχειμάζετο.

Καρίων

καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἀναθήσων ἔφερες οὖν;

Δίκαιος
νὴ τὸν Δία.

Καρίων

χαρίεντά γ᾽ ἥκεις δῶρα τῷ θεῷ φέρων.

Συκοφάντης

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ὡς ἀπόλωλα δείλαιος,
καὶ κακοδαίμων καὶ τετράκις καὶ πεντάκις
καὶ δωδεκάκις καὶ μυριάκις: ἰοὺ ἰού.
οὕτω πολυφόρῳ συγκέκραμαι δαίμονι.

Καρίων

Ἄπολλον ἀποτρόπαιε καὶ θεοὶ φίλοι,
τί ποτ᾽ ἐστὶν ὅ τι πέπονθεν ἄνθρωπος κακόν; **Συκοφάντης**

οὐ γὰρ σχέτλια πέπονθα νυνὶ πράγματα,
ἀπολωλεκὼς ἅπαντα τἀκ τῆς οἰκίας
διὰ τὸν θεὸν τοῦτον, τὸν ἐσόμενον τυφλὸν
πάλιν αὖθις, ἤνπερ μὴ ‘λλίπωσιν αἱ δίκαι; **Δίκαιος**

ἐγὼ σχεδὸν τὸ πρᾶγμα γιγνώσκειν δοκῶ.
προσέρχεταί γάρ τις κακῶς πράττων ἀνήρ,
ἔοικε δ᾽ εἶναι τοῦ πονηροῦ κόμματος.

Καρίων

νὴ Δία καλῶς τοίνυν ποιῶν ἀπόλλυται.

Συκοφάντης

ποῦ ποῦ ‘σθ᾽ ὁ μόνος ἅπαντας ἡμᾶς πλουσίους
ὑποσχόμενος οὗτος ποιήσειν εὐθέως,
εἰ πάλιν ἀναβλέψειεν ἐξ ἀρχῆς; ὁ δὲ
πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐνίους ἐστὶν ἐξολωλεκώς.

Καρίων

καὶ τίνα δέδρακε δῆτα τοῦτ᾽;

Συκοφάντης
ἐμὲ τουτονί.

Καρίων

ἦ τῶν πονηρῶν ἦσθα καὶ τοιχωούχων;

Συκοφάντης

μὰ Δί᾽ οὐ μὲν οὖν ἔσθ᾽ ὑγιὲς ὑμῶν οὐδενός,
κοὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως οὐκ ἔχετέ μου τὰ χρήματα.

Καρίων

ὡς σοβαρὸς ὦ Δάματερ εἰσελήλυθεν
ὁ συκοφάντης. δῆλον ὅτι βουλιμιᾷ.

Συκοφάντης

σὺ μὲν εἰς ἀγορὰν ἰὼν ταχέως οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις:
ἐπὶ τοῦ τροχοῦ γὰρ δεῖ σ᾽ ἐκεῖ στρεβλούμενον
εἰπεῖν ἃ πεπανούργηκας.

Καρίων
οἰμώξᾰρα σύ.

Δίκαιος

νὴ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτῆρα πολλοῦ γ᾽ ἄξιος
ἅπασι τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ὁ θεός ἐσθ᾽ ὅτι
τοὺς συκοφάντας ἐξολεῖ κακοὺς κακῶς.

Συκοφάντης

οἴμοι τάλας: μῶν καὶ σὺ μετέχων καταγελᾷς;
ἐπεὶ πόθεν θοἰμάτιον εἴληφας τοδί;
ἐχθὲς δ᾽ ἔχοντ᾽ εἶδόν σ᾽ ἐγὼ τριβώνιον.

Δίκαιος

οὐδὲν προτιμῶ σου. φορῶ γὰρ πριάμενος
τὸν δακτύλιον τονδὶ παρ᾽ Εὐδάμου δραχμῆς.

Καρίων

† ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔνεστι συκοφάντου δήγματος.†

Συκοφάντης

ἆρ᾽ οὐχ ὕβρις ταῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ πολλή; σκώπτετον,
ὅ τι δὲ ποιεῖτον ἐνθάδ᾽ οὐκ εἰρήκατον.
οὐκ ἐπ᾽ ἀγαθῷ γὰρ ἐνθάδ᾽ ἐστὸν οὐδενί.

Δίκαιος

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὔκουν τῷ γε σῷ, σάφ᾽ ἴσθ᾽ ὅτι.

Συκοφάντης

ἀπὸ τῶν ἐμῶν γὰρ ναὶ μὰ Δία δειπνήσετον.

Καρίων

ὡς δὴ ‘π᾽ ἀληθείᾳ σὺ μετὰ τοῦ μάρτυρος
διαρραγείης μηδενός γ᾽ ἐμπλήμενος.

Συκοφάντης

ἀρνεῖσθον; ἔνδον ἐστὶν ᾧ μιαρωτάτω
πολὺ χρῆμα τεμαχῶν καὶ κρεῶν ὠπτημένων.
ὒ ὒ ὒ ὒ ὒ ὒ ὒ ὒ ὒ ὒ ὒ ὒ.

Καρίων

κακόδαιμον ὀσφραίνει τι;

Δίκαιος
τοῦ ψύχους γ᾽ ἴσως
ἐπεὶ τοιοῦτόν γ᾽ ἀμπέχεται τριβώνιον.

Συκοφάντης

ταῦτ᾽ οὖν ἀνασχέτ᾽ ἐστὶν ᾧ Ζεῦ καὶ θεοί,

τούτους ὑβρίζειν εἰς ἔμ᾽; οἴμ᾽ ὡς ἄχθομαι
ὅτι χρηστὸς ὢν καὶ φιλόπολις πάσχω κακῶς.

Δίκαιος

σὺ φιλόπολις καὶ χρηστός;

Συκοφάντης
ὡς οὐδείς γ᾽ ἀνήρ.

Δίκαιος

καὶ μὴν ἐπερωτηθεὶς ἀπόκριναί μοι.

Συκοφάντης
τὸ τί;

Δίκαιος

γεωργὸς εἶ;

Συκοφάντης
μελαγχολᾶν μ᾽ οὕτως οἴει;

Δίκαιος

ἀλλ᾽ ἔμπορος;

Συκοφάντης
ναί, σκήπτομαί γ᾽, ὅταν τύχω.

Δίκαιος

τί δαί; τέχνην τιν᾽ ἔμαθες;

Συκοφάντης
οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία.

Δίκαιος

πῶς οὖν διέζης ἢ πόθεν μηδὲν ποιῶν;

Συκοφάντης

τῶν τῆς πόλεώς εἰμ᾽ ἐπιμελητὴς πραγμάτων
καὶ τῶν ἰδίων πάντων.

Δίκαιος
σύ; τί μαθών;

Συκοφάντης
βούλομαι.

Δίκαιος

πῶς οὖν ἂν εἴης χρηστὸς ὦ τοιχωρύχε,
910 εἴ σοι προσῆκον μηδὲν εἶτ᾽ ἀπεχθάνει; **Συκοφάντης**

οὐ γὰρ προσήκει τὴν ἐμαυτοῦ μοι πόλιν
εὐεργετεῖν ὦ κέπφε καθ᾽ ὅσον ἂν σθένω;

Δίκαιος

εὐεργετεῖν οὖν ἐστι τὸ πολυπραγμονεῖν;

Συκοφάντης

τὸ μὲν οὖν βοηθεῖν τοῖς νόμοις τοῖς κειμένοις
915 καὶ μὴ ‘πιτρέπειν ἐάν τις ἐξαμαρτάνῃ.

Δίκαιος

οὔκουν δικαστὰς ἐξεπίτηδες ἡ πόλις
ἄρχειν καθίστησιν;

Συκοφάντης
κατηγορεῖ δὲ τίς;

Δίκαιος

ὁ βουλόμενος.

Συκοφάντης
οὐκοῦν ἐκεῖνός εἰμ᾽ ἐγώ,
ὥστ᾽ εἰς ἔμ᾽ ἥκει τῆς πόλεως τὰ πράγματα.

Δίκαιος

νὴ Δία πονηρόν γ᾽ ἆρα προστάτην ἔχει.
ἐκεῖνο δ᾽ οὐ βούλοι᾽ ἄν, ἡσυχίαν ἔχων
ζῆν ἀργός; **Συκοφάντης**
ἀλλὰ προβατίου βίον λέγεις,
εἰ μὴ φανεῖται διατριβή τις τῷ βίῳ.

Δίκαιος

οὐδ᾽ ἂν μεταμάθοις;

Συκοφάντης
οὐδ᾽ ἂν εἰ δοίης γέ μοι
τὸν Πλοῦτον αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ Βάττου σίλφιον.

Δίκαιος

κατάθου ταχέως θοἰμάτιον.

Καρίων
οὗτος, σοὶ λέγει.

Δίκαιος

ἔπειθ᾽ ὑπόλυσαι.

Καρίων
ταῦτα πάντα σοὶ λέγει.

Συκοφάντης

καὶ μὴν προσελθέτω πρὸς ἔμ᾽ ὑμῶν ἐνθαδὶ
ὁ βουλόμενος.

Καρίων
οὐκοῦν ἐκεῖνός εἰμ᾽ ἐγώ.

Συκοφάντης

οἴμοι τάλας ἀποδύομαι μεθ᾽ ἡμέραν.

Καρίων

σὺ γὰρ ἀξιοῖς τἀλλότρια πράττων ἐσθίειν.

Συκοφάντης

ὁρᾷς ἃ ποιεῖς; ταῦτ᾽ ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι.

Δίκαιος

ἀλλ᾽ οἴχεται φεύγων ὃν ἦγες μάρτυρα.

Συκοφάντης

οἴμοι περιείλημμαι μόνος.

Καρίων
νυνὶ βοᾷς;

Συκοφάντης

οἴμοι μάλ᾽ αὖθις.

Καρίων
δὸς σύ μοι τὸ τριβώνιον,
ἵν᾽ ἀμφιέσω τὸν συκοφάντην τουτονί.

Δίκαιος

μὴ δῆθ᾽: ἱερὸν γάρ ἐστι τοῦ Πλούτου πάλαι.

Καρίων

ἔπειτα ποῦ κάλλιον ἀνατεθήσεται

ἢ περὶ πονηρὸν ἄνδρα καὶ τοιχωρύχον;
Πλοῦτον δὲ κοσμεῖν ἱματίοις σεμνοῖς πρέπει.

Δίκαιος

τοῖς δ᾽ ἐμβαδίοις τί χρήσεταί τις; εἰπέ μοι.

Καρίων

καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς τὸ μέτωπον αὐτίκα δὴ μάλα
ὥσπερ κοτίνῳ προσπατταλεύσω τουτῳί.

Συκοφάντης

ἄπειμι: γιγνώσκω γὰρ ἥττων ὢν πολὺ
ὑμῶν: ἐὰν δὲ σύζυγον λάβω τινὰ
καὶ σύκινον, τοῦτον τὸν ἰσχυρὸν θεὸν
ἐγὼ ποιήσω τήμερον δοῦναι δίκην,
ὁτιὴ καταλύει περιφανῶς εἷς ὢν μόνος
τὴν δημοκρατίαν, οὔτε τὴν βουλὴν πιθὼν
τὴν τῶν πολιτῶν οὔτε τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.

Δίκαιος

καὶ μὴν ἐπειδὴ τὴν πανοπλίαν τὴν ἐμὴν
ἔχων βαδίζεις, ἐς τὸ βαλανεῖον τρέχε:
ἔπειτ᾽ ἐκεῖ κορυφαῖος ἑστηκὼς θέρου.
κἀγὼ γὰρ εἶχον τὴν στάσιν ταύτην ποτέ.

Καρίων

ἀλλ᾽ ὁ βαλανεὺς ἕλξει θύραζ᾽ αὐτὸν λαβὼν
τῶν ὀρχιπέδων: ἰδὼν γὰρ αὐτὸν γνώσεται
ὅτι ἔστ᾽ ἐκείνου τοῦ πονηροῦ κόμματος.
νὼ δ᾽ εἰσίωμεν, ἵνα προσεύξῃ τὸν θεόν.

Χοροῦ

Γραῦς

ἆρ᾽ ὦ φίλοι γέροντες ἐπὶ τὴν οἰκίαν
ἀφίγμεθ᾽ ὄντως τοῦ νέου τούτου θεοῦ,
ἢ τῆς ὁδοῦ τὸ παράπαν ἡμαρτήκαμεν; **Χορός**

ἀλλ᾽ ἴσθ᾽ ἐπ᾽ αὐτὰς τὰς θύρας ἀφιγμένη
ὦ μειρακίσκη: πυνθάνει γὰρ ὡρικῶς.

Γραῦς

φέρε νυν ἐγὼ τῶν ἔνδοθεν καλέσω τινά.

Χρεμύλος

μὴ δῆτ᾽: ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐξελήλυθα.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅ τι μάλιστ᾽ ἐλήλυθας λέγειν σ᾽ ἐχρῆν.

Γραῦς

πέπονθα δεινὰ καὶ παράνομ᾽ ὦ φίλτατε:
ἀφ᾽ οὗ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς οὗτος ἤρξατο βλέπειν,
ἀβίωτον εἶναί μοι πεποίηκε τὸν βίον.

Χρεμύλος

τί δ᾽ ἔστιν; ἦ που καὶ σὺ συκοφάντρια
εν ταῖς γυναιξὶν ἦσθα; **Γραῦς**
μὰ Δί᾽ ἐγὼ μὲν οὔ.

Χρεμύλος

ἀλλ᾽ οὐ λαχοῦσ᾽ ἔπινες ἐν τῷ γράμματι;

Γραῦς

σκώπτεις: ἐγὼ δὲ κατακέκνισμαι δειλάκρα.

Χρεμύλος

οὔκουν ἐρεῖς ἀνύσασα τὸν κνισμὸν τίνα;

Γραῦς

ἄκουέ νυν. ἦν μοί τι μειράκιον φίλον,
πενιχρὸν μέν, ἄλλως δ᾽ εὐπρόσωπον καὶ καλὸν
καὶ χρηστόν: εἰ γάρ του δεηθείην ἐγώ,
ἅπαντ᾽ ἐποίει κοσμίως μοι καὶ καλῶς:
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐκείνῳ πάντα ταῦθ᾽ ὑπηρέτουν.

Χρεμύλος

τί δ᾽ ἦν ὅ τι σου μάλιστ᾽ ἐδεῖθ᾽ ἑκάστοτε;

Γραῦς

οὐ πολλά: καὶ γὰρ ἐκνομίως μ᾽ ᾐσχύνετο.
ἀλλ᾽ ἀργυρίου δραχμὰς ἂν ᾔτησ᾽ εἴκοσιν
εἰς ἱμάτιον, ὀκτὼ δ᾽ ἂν εἰς ὑποδήματα:
καὶ ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς ἀγοράσαι χιτώνιον
ἐκέλευσεν ἂν τῇ μητρί θ᾽ ἱματίδιον:
πυρῶν τ᾽ ἂν ἐδεήθη μεδίμνων τεττάρων.

Χρεμύλος

οὐ πολλὰ τοίνυν μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω ταῦτά γε
εἴρηκας, ἀλλὰ δῆλον ὅτι σ᾽ ᾐχύνετο.

Γραῦς

καὶ ταῦτα τοίνυν οὐχ ἕνεκα μισητίας
αἰτεῖν μ᾽ ἔφασκεν, ἀλλὰ φιλίας οὕνεκα,
ἵνα τοὐμὸν ἱμάτιον φορῶν μεμνῆτό μου.

Χρεμύλος

λέγεις ἐρῶντ᾽ ἄνθρωπον ἐκνομιώτατα.

Γραῦς

ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ νῦν ὁ βδελυρὸς ἔτι τὸν νοῦν ἔχει
τὸν αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μεθέστηκεν πάνυ.

ἐμοῦ γὰρ αὐτῷ τὸν πλακοῦντα τουτονὶ
καὶ τἄλλα τἀπὶ τοῦ πίνακος τραγήματα
ἐπόντα πεμψάσης ὑπειπούσης θ᾽ ὅτι
εἰς ἑσπέραν ἥξοιμι — **Χρεμύλος**
τί σ᾽ ἔδρασ᾽; εἰπέ μοι.

Γραῦς

ἄμητα προσαπέπεμψεν ἡμῖν τουτονί,
ἐφ᾽ ᾧ τ᾽ ἐκεῖσε μηδέποτέ μ᾽ ἐλθεῖν ἔτι,
καὶ πρὸς ἐπὶ τούτοις εἶπεν ἀποπέμπων ὅτι
‘ πάλαι ποτ᾽ ἦσαν ἄλκιμοι Μιλήσιοι.’

Χρεμύλος

δῆλον ὅτι τοὺς τρόπους τις οὐ μοχθηρὸς ἦν,
ἔπειτα πλουτῶν οὐκέθ᾽ ἥδεται φακῇ:
πρὸ τοῦ δ᾽ ὑπὸ τῆς πενίας ἄπανθ᾽ ὑπήσθιεν.

Γραῦς

καὶ μὴν πρὸ τοῦ γ᾽ ὁσημέραι νὴ τὼ θεὼ
ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν ἐβάδιζεν ἀεὶ τὴν ἐμήν.

Χρεμύλος

ἐπ᾽ ἐκφοράν;

Γραῦς
μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλὰ τῆς φωνῆς μόνον
ἐρῶν ἀκοῦσαι.

Χρεμύλος
τοῦ λαβεῖν μὲν οὖν χάριν.

Γραῦς

καὶ νὴ Δί᾽ εἰ λυπουμένην γ᾽ αἴσθοιτό με,
νηττάριον ἂν καὶ φάττιον ὑπεκορίζετο.

Χρεμύλος

ἔπειτ᾽ ἴσως ᾔτει σ᾽ ἂν εἰς ὑποδήματα.

Γραῦς

μυστηρίοις δὲ τοῖς μεγάλοις ὀχουμένην
ἐπὶ τῆς ἁμάξης ὅτι προσέβλεψέν μέ τις,
ἐτυπτόμην διὰ τοῦθ᾽ ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν.
οὕτω σφόδρα ζηλότυπος ὁ νεανίσκος ἦν.

Χρεμύλος

μόνος γὰρ ἥδεθ᾽, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐσθίων.

Γραῦς

καὶ τάς γε χεῖρας παγκάλας ἔχειν μ᾽ ἔθη.

Χρεμύλος

ὁπότε προτείνοιέν γε δραχμὰς εἴκοσιν.

Γραῦς

ὄζειν τε τῆς χρόας ἔφασκεν ἡδύ μου.

Χρεμύλος

εἰ Θάσιον ἐνέχεις, εἰκότως γε νὴ Δία.

Γραῦς

τὸ βλέμμα θ᾽ ὡς ἔχοιμι μαλακὸν καὶ καλόν.

Χρεμύλος

οὐ σκαιὸς ἦν ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ᾽ ἠπίστατο
γραὸς καπρώσης τἀφόδια κατεσθίειν.

Γραῦς

ταῦτ᾽ οὖν ὁ θεὸς ὦ φίλ᾽ ἄνερ οὐκ ὀρθῶς ποιεῖ,
φάσκων βοηθεῖν τοῖς ἀδικουμένοις ἀεί.

Χρεμύλος

τί γὰρ ποιήσει; φράζε, καὶ πεπράξεται.

Γραῦς

ἀναγκάσαι δίκαιόν ἐστι νὴ Δία
τὸν εὖ παθόνθ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ πάλιν μ᾽ ἀντευποιεῖν,
ἢ μηδ᾽ ὁτιοῦν ἀγαθὸν δίκαιόν ἐστ᾽ ἔχειν.

Χρεμύλος

οὔκουν καθ᾽ ἑκάστην ἀπεδίδου τὴν νύκτα σοι;

Γραῦς

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδέποτέ με ζῶσαν ἀπολείψειν ἔφη.

Χρεμύλος

ὀρθῶς γε: νῦν δέ γ᾽ οὐκέτι ζῆν σ᾽ οἴεται.

Γραῦς

ὑπὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἄλγους κατατέτηκ᾽ ὦ φίλτατε.

Χρεμύλος

οὐκ ἀλλὰ κατασέσηπας, ὥς γ᾽ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς.

Γραῦς

διὰ δακτυλίου μὲν οὖν ἔμεγ᾽ ἂν διελκύσαις.

Χρεμύλος

εἰ τυγχάνοι γ᾽ ὁ δακτύλιος ὢν τηλία.

Γραῦς

καὶ μὴν τὸ μειράκιον τοδὶ προσέρχεται,
οὗπερ πάλαι κατηγοροῦσα τυγχάνω:
ἔοικε δ᾽ ἐπὶ κῶμον βαδίζειν.

Χρεμύλος
φαίνεται.
στέφανόν γέ τοι καὶ δᾷδ᾽ ἔχων πορεύεται.

Νεανίας

ἀσπάζομαί σε.

Γραῦς
τί φησιν; **Νεανίας**
ἀρχαία φίλη,
πολιὰ γεγένησαι ταχύ γε νὴ τὸν οὐρανόν.

Γραῦς

τάλαιν᾽ ἐγὼ τῆς ὕβρεος ἧς ὑβρίζομαι.

Χρεμύλος

ἔοικε διὰ πολλοῦ χρόνου σ᾽ ἑορακέναι.

Γραῦς

ποίου χρόνου ταλάνταθ᾽, ὃς παρ᾽ ἐμοὶ χθὲς ἦν;

Χρεμύλος

τοὐναντίον πέπονθε τοῖς πολλοῖς ἄρα:
μεθύων γάρ, ὡς ἔικεν, ὀξύτερον βλέπει.

Γραῦς

οὔκ, ἀλλ᾽ ἀκόλαστός ἐστιν ἀεὶ τοὺς τρόπους.

Νεανίας

ὦ Ποντοπόσειδον καὶ θεοὶ πρεσβυτικοί,
ἐν τῷ προσώπῳ τῶν ῥυτίδων ὅσας ἔχει.

Γραῦς

ἆ ἆ,
τὴν δᾷδα μή μοι πρόσφερ᾽.

Χρεμύλος
εὖ μέντοι λέγει.
ἐὰν γὰρ αὐτὴν εἷς μόνος σπινθὴρ λάβῃ
ὥσπερ παλαιὰν εἰρεσιώνην καύσεται.

Νεανίας

βούλει διὰ χρόνου πρός με παῖσαι;

Γραῦς
ποῖ τάλαν; **Νεανίας**

αὐτοῦ, λαβοῦσα κάρνα.

Γραῦς
παιδιὰν τίνα; **Νεανίας**

πόσους ἔχεις ὀδόντας.

Χρεμύλος
ἀλλὰ γνώσομαι
κἄγωγ᾽: ἔχει γὰρ τρεῖς ἴσως ἢ τέτταρας.

Νεανίας

ἀπότεισον: ἕνα γὰρ γόμφιον μόνον φορεῖ.

Γραῦς

ταλάντατ᾽ ἀνδρῶν οὐχ ὑγιαίνειν μοι δοκεῖς,

πλυνόν με ποιῶν ἐν τοσούτοις ἀνδράσιν.

Νεανίας

ὄναιο μέντἄν, εἴ τις ἐκπλύνειέ σε.

Χρεμύλος

οὐ δῆτ᾽, ἐπεὶ νῦν μὲν καπηλικῶς ἔχει,
εἰ δ᾽ ἐκπλυνεῖται τοῦτο τὸ ψιμύθιον,
ὄψει κατάδηλα τοῦ προσώπου τὰ ῥάκη.

Γραῦς

γέρων ἀνὴρ ὢν οὐχ ὑγιαίνειν μοι δοκεῖς.

Νεανίας

πειρᾷ μὲν οὖν ἴσως σε καὶ τῶν τιτθίων
ἐφάπτεταί σου λανθάνειν δοκῶν ἐμέ.

Γραῦς

μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην οὐκ ἐμοῦ γ᾽ ὦ βδελυρὲ σύ.

Χρεμύλος

μὰ τὴν Ἑκάτην οὐ δῆτα: μαινοίμην γὰρ ἄν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ νεανίσκ᾽ οὐκ ἐῶ τὴν μείρακα
μισεῖν σε ταύτην.

Νεανίας
ἀλλ᾽ ἔγωγ᾽ ὑπερφιλῶ.

Χρεμύλος

καὶ μὴν κατηγορεῖ γέ σου.

Νεανίας
τί κατηγορεῖ;

Χρεμύλος

εἶναί σ᾽ ὑβριστήν φησι καὶ λέγειν ὅτι
‘ πάλαι ποτ᾽ ἦσαν ἄλκιμοι Μιλήσιοι.’

Νεανίας

ἐγὼ περὶ ταύτης οὐ μαχοῦμαί σοι.

Χρεμύλος
τὸ τί;

Νεανίας

αἰσχυνόμενος τὴν ἡλικίαν τὴν σήν, ἐπεὶ
οὐκ ἄν ποτ᾽ ἄλλῳ τοῦτ᾽ ἐπέτρεψ᾽ ἐγὼ ποιεῖν:
νῦν δ᾽ ἄπιθι χαίρων συλλαβὼν τὴν μείρακα.

Χρεμύλος

οἶδ᾽ οἶδα τὸν νοῦν: οὐκέτ᾽ ἀξιοῖς ἴσως
εἶναι μετ᾽ αὐτῆς.

Γραῦς
ὁ δ᾽ ἐπιτρέψων ἐστὶ τίς; **Νεανίας**

οὐκ ἂν διαλεχθείην διεσπλεκωμένῃ
ὑπὸ μυρίων ἐτῶν γε καὶ τρισχιλίων.

Χρεμύλος

ὅμως δ᾽ ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὸν οἶνον ἠξίους
πίνειν, συνεκποτέ᾽ ἐστί σοι καὶ τὴν τρύγα.

Νεανίας

ἀλλ᾽ ἔστι κομιδῇ τρὺξ παλαιὰ καὶ σαπρά.

Χρεμύλος

οὐκοῦν τρύγοιπος ταῦτα πάντ᾽ ἰάσεται.

Νεανίας

ἀλλ᾽ εἴσιθ᾽ εἴσω: τῷ θεῷ γὰρ βούλομαι
ἐλθὼν ἀναθεῖναι τοὺς στεφάνους τούσδ᾽ οὓς ἔχω.

Γραῦς

ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ αὐτῷ καὶ φράσαι τι βούλομαι.

Νεανίας

ἐγὼ δέ γ᾽ οὐκ εἴσειμι.

Χρεμύλος
θάρρει, μὴ φοβοῦ.
οὐ γὰρ βιάσεται.

Νεανίας
πάνυ καλῶς τοίνυν λέγεις.
ἱκανὸν γὰρ αὐτὴν πρότερον ὑπεπίττουν χρόνον.

Γραῦς

βάδιζ᾽: ἐγὼ δέ σου κατόπιν εἰσέρχομαι.

Χρεμύλος

ὡς εὐτόνως ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ τὸ γράδιον
ὥσπερ λεπὰς τῷ μειρακίῳ προσείχετο.

Χοροῦ

Καρίων

τίς ἔσθ᾽ ὁ κόπτων τὴν θύραν; τουτὶ τί ἦν;
οὐδεὶς ἔοικεν: ἀλλὰ δῆτα τὸ θύριον
φθεγγόμενον ἄλλως κλαυσιᾷ.

Ἑρμῆς

σέ τοι λέγω,
ὁ Καρίων, ἀνάμεινον.

Καρίων
οὗτος εἰπέ μοι,
σὺ τὴν θύραν ἔκοπτες οὐτωσὶ σφόδρα; **Ἑρμῆς**

μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ἔμελλον: εἶτ᾽ ἀνέῳξάς με φθάσας.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκκάλει τὸν δεσπότην τρέχων ταχύ,
ἔπειτα τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ παιδία,
ἔπειτα τοὺς θεράποντας, εἶτα τὴν κύνα,
ἔπειτα σαυτόν, εἶτα τὴν ὗν.

Καρίων
εἰπέ μοι,
τί δ᾽ ἔστιν;

Ἑρμῆς
ὁ Ζεὺς ὦ πόνηρε βούλεται
ἐς ταὐτὸν ὑμᾶς συγκυκήσας τρύβλιον
ἁπαξάπαντας ἐς τὸ βάραθρον ἐμβαλεῖν.

Καρίων

ἡ γλῶττα τῷ κήρυκι τούτων τέμνεται.
ἀτὰρ διὰ τί δὴ ταῦτ᾽ ἐπιβουλεύει ποιεῖν
ἡμᾶς; **Ἑρμῆς**
ὁτιὴ δεινότατα πάντων πραγμάτων
εἴργασθ᾽. ἀφ᾽ οὗ γὰρ ἤρξατ᾽ ἐξ ἀρχῆς βλέπειν
ὁ Πλοῦτος, οὐδεὶς οὐ λιβανωτόν, οὐ δάφνην,
οὐ ψαιστόν, οὐχ ἱερεῖον, οὐκ ἄλλ᾽ οὐδὲ ἓν
ἡμῖν ἔτι θύει τοῖς θεοῖς.

Καρίων
μὰ Δί᾽ οὐδέ γε
θύσει. κακῶς γὰρ ἐπεμελεῖσθ᾽ ἡμῶν τότε.

Ἑρμῆς

καὶ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων μοι θεῶν ἧττον μέλει,
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀπόλωλα κἀπιτέτριμμαι.

Καρίων
σωφρονεῖς.

Ἑρμῆς

πρότερον γὰρ εἶχον μὲν παρὰ ταῖς καπηλίσιν
πάντ᾽ ἀγάθ᾽ ἔωθεν εὐθύς, οἰνοῦτταν μέλι
ἰσχάδας, ὅσ᾽ εἰκός ἐστιν Ἑρμῆν ἐσθίειν:
νυνὶ δὲ πεινῶν ἀναβάδην ἀναπαύομαι.

Καρίων

οὔκουν δικαίως, ὅστις ἐποίεις ζημίαν
ἐνίοτε τοιαῦτ᾽ ἀγάθ᾽ ἔχων; **Ἑρμῆς**
οἴμοι τάλας,
οἴμοι πλακοῦντος τοῦ ν᾽ τετράδι πεπεμμένου.

Καρίων

ποθεῖς τὸν οὐ παρόντα καὶ μάτην καλεῖς.

Ἑρμῆς

οἴμοι δὲ κωλῆς ἣν ἐγὼ κατήσθιον.

Καρίων

ἀσκωλίαζ᾽ ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τὴν αἰθρίαν.

Ἑρμῆς

σπλάγχνων τε θερμῶν ὧν ἐγὼ κατήσθιον.

Καρίων

ὀδύνη σε περὶ τὰ σπλάγχν᾽ ἔοικέ τι στρέφειν.

Ἑρμῆς

οἴμοι δὲ κύλικος ἴσον ἴσῳ κεκραμένης.

Καρίων

ταύτην ἐπιπιὼν ἀποτρέχων οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις.

Ἑρμῆς

ἆρ᾽ ὠφελήσαις ἄν τι τὸν σαυτοῦ φίλον;

Καρίων

εἴ του δέει γ᾽ ὧν δυνατός εἰμί σ᾽ ὠφελεῖν.

Ἑρμῆς

εἴ μοι πορίσας ἄρτον τιν᾽ εὖ πεπεμμένον
δοίης καταφαγεῖν καὶ κρέας νεανικὸν
ὧν θύεθ᾽ ὑμεῖς ἔνδον.

Καρίων
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐκφορά.

Ἑρμῆς

καὶ μὴν ὁπότε τι σκευάριον τοῦ δεσπότου
ὑφέλοι᾽, ἐγώ σε λανθάνειν ἐποίουν ἀεί.

Καρίων

ἐφ᾽ ᾧ τε μετέχειν καὐτὸς ὧ τοιχωρύχε.
ἦκεν γὰρ ἄν σοι ναστὸς εὖ πεπεμμένος.

Ἑρμῆς

ἔπειτα τοῦτόν γ᾽ αὐτὸς ἂν κατήσθιες.

Καρίων

οὐ γὰρ μετεῖχες τὰς ἴσας πληγὰς ἐμοί,
ὁπότε τι ληφθείην πανουργήσας ἐγώ.

Ἑρμῆς

μὴ μνησικακήσῃς, εἰ σὺ Φυλὴν κατέλαβες.
ἀλλὰ ξύνοικον πρὸς θεῶν δέξασθέ με.

Καρίων

ἔπειτ᾽ ἀπολιπὼν τοὺς θεοὺς ἐνθάδε μενεῖς;

Ἑρμῆς

τὰ γὰρ παρ᾽ ὑμῖν ἐστι βελτίω πολύ.

Καρίων

τί δέ; ταὐτομολεῖν ἀστεῖον εἶναί σοι δοκεῖ;

Ἑρμῆς

πατρὶς γάρ ἐστι πᾶσ᾽ ἵν᾽ ἂν πράττῃ τις εὖ.

Καρίων

τί δῆτ᾽ ἂν εἴης ὄφελος ἡμῖν ἐνθάδ᾽ ὤν;

Ἑρμῆς

παρὰ τὴν θύραν στροφαῖον ἱδρύσασθέ με.

Καρίων

στροφαῖον; ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔργον ἔστ᾽ οὐδὲν στροφῶν.

Ἑρμῆς

ἀλλ᾽ ἐμπολαῖον.

Καρίων
ἀλλὰ πλουτοῦμεν: τί οὖν
Ἑρμῆν παλιγκάπηλον ἡμᾶς δεῖ τρέφειν; **Ἑρμῆς**

ἀλλὰ δόλιον τοίνυν.

Καρίων
δόλιον; ἥκιστά γε:
οὐ γὰρ δόλου νῦν ἔργον, ἀλλ᾽ ἁπλῶν τρόπων.

Ἑρμῆς

ἀλλ᾽ ἡγεμόνιον.

Καρίων
ἀλλ᾽ ὁ θεὸς ἤδη βλέπει,
ὥσθ᾽ ἡγεμόνος οὐδὲν δεησόμεσθ᾽ ἔτι.

Ἑρμῆς

ἐναγώνιος τοίνυν ἔσομαι. τί δῆτ᾽ ἐρεῖς;
Πλούτῳ γάρ ἐστι τοῦτο συμφορώτατον
ποιεῖν ἀγῶνας μουσικοὺς καὶ γυμνικούς.

Καρίων

ὡς ἀγαθόν ἐστ᾽ ἐπωνυμίας πολλὰς ἔχειν:
οὗτος γὰρ ἐξηύρηκεν αὐτῷ βιότιον.
οὐκ ἐτὸς ἅπαντες οἱ δικάζοντες θαμὰ
σπεύδουσιν ἐν πολλοῖς γεγράφθαι γράμμασιν.

Ἑρμῆς

οὐκοῦν ἐπὶ τούτοις εἰσίω;

Καρίων
καὶ πλῦνέ γε
αὐτὸς προσελθὼν πρὸς τὸ φρέαρ τὰς κοιλίας,
ἵν᾽ εὐθέως διακονικὸς εἶναι δοκῇς.

Χοροῦ

Ἱερεύς

τίς ἂν φράσειε ποῦ ‘στι Χρεμύλος μοι σαφῶς;

Χρεμύλος

τί δ᾽ ἔστιν ὦ βέλτιστε;

Ἱερεύς
τί γὰρ ἀλλ᾽ ἢ κακῶς;
ἀφ᾽ οὗ γὰρ ὁ Πλοῦτος οὗτος ἤρξατο βλέπειν,
ἀπόλωλ᾽ ὑπὸ λιμοῦ. καταφαγεῖν γὰρ οὐκ ἔχω,
καὶ ταῦτα τοῦ σωτῆρος ἱερεὺς ὢν Διός.

Χρεμύλος

ἡ δ᾽ αἰτία τίς ἐστιν ὦ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν;

Ἱερεύς

θύειν ἔτ᾽ οὐδεὶς ἀξιοῖ.

Χρεμύλος
τίνος οὕνεκα;

Ἱερεύς

ὅτι πάντες εἰσὶ πλούσιοι: καίτοι τότε,
ὅτ᾽ εἶχον οὐδέν, ὁ μὲν ἂν ἥκων ἔμπορος
ἔθυσεν ἱερεῖόν τι σωθείς, ὁ δέ τις ἂν
δίκην ἀποφυγών, ὁ δ᾽ ἂν ἐκαλλιερεῖτό τις
κἀμέ γ᾽ ἐκάλει τὸν ἱερέα: νῦν δ᾽ οὐδὲ εἷς
θύει τὸ παράπαν οὐδὲν οὐδ᾽ εἰσέρχεται,
πλὴν ἀποπατησόμενοί γε πλεῖν ἢ μύριοι.

Χρεμύλος

οὔκουν τὰ νομιζόμενα σὺ τούτων λαμβάνεις;

Ἱερεύς

τὸν οὖν Δία τὸν σωτῆρα καὐτός μοι δοκῶ
χαίρειν ἐάσας ἐνθάδ᾽ αὐτοῦ καταμένειν.

Χρεμύλος

θάρρει: καλῶς ἔσται γάρ, ἢν θεὸς θέλῃ.
ὁ Ζεὺς ὁ σωτὴρ γὰρ πάρεστιν ἐνθάδε,
αὐτόματος ἥκων.

Ἱερεύς
πάντ᾽ ἀγαθὰ τοίνυν λέγεις.

Χρεμύλος

ἱδρυσόμεθ᾽ οὖν αὐτίκα μάλ᾽, ἀλλὰ περίμενε
τὸν Πλοῦτον, οὗπερ πρότερον ἦν ἱδρυμένος
τὸν ὀπισθόδομον ἀεὶ φυλάττων τῆς θεοῦ.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐκδότω τις δεῦρο δᾷδας ἡμμένας,
ἵν᾽ ἔχων προηγῇ τῷ θεῷ σύ.

Ἱερεύς
πάνυ μὲν οὖν
δρᾶν ταῦτα χρή.

Χρεμύλος
τὸν Πλοῦτον ἔξω τις κάλει.

Γραῦς

ἐγὼ δὲ τί ποιῶ;

Χρεμύλος
τὰς χύτρας, αἷς τὸν θεὸν
ἱδρυσόμεθα, λαβοῦσ᾽ ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς φέρε
σεμνῶς: ἔχουσα δ᾽ ἦλθες αὐτὴ ποικίλα.

Γραῦς

ὧν δ᾽ οὕνεκ᾽ ἦλθον;

Χρεμύλος
πάντα σοι πεπράξεται.
ἥξει γὰρ ὁ νεανίσκος ὡς σ᾽ εἰς ἑσπέραν.

Γραῦς

ἀλλ᾽ εἴ γε μέντοι νὴ Δί᾽ ἐγγυᾷ σύ μοι
ἥξειν ἐκεῖνον ὡς ἔμ᾽, οἴσω τὰς χύτρας.

Χρεμύλος

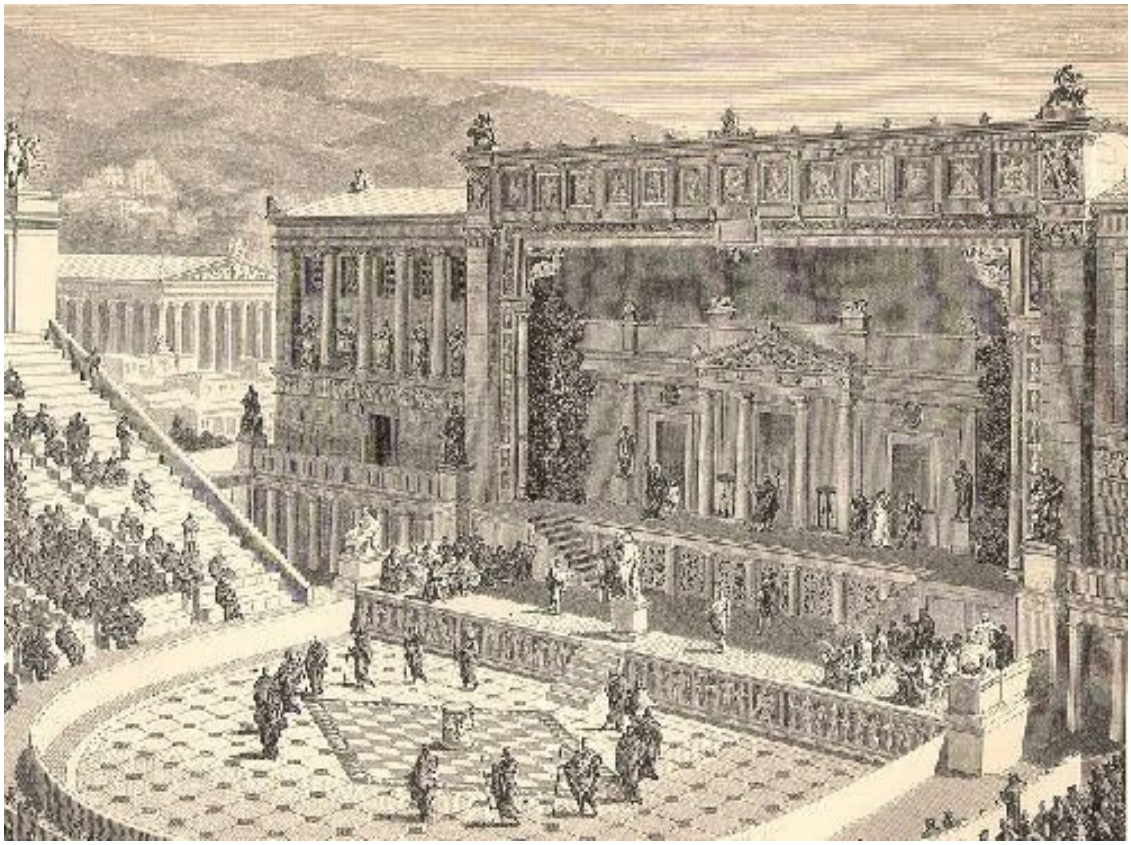
καὶ μὴν πολὺ τῶν ἄλλων χυτρῶν τἀναντία
αὗται ποιοῦσι: ταῖς μὲν ἄλλαις γὰρ χύτραις
ἡ γραῦς ἔπεστ᾽ ἀνωτάτω, ταύτης δὲ νῦν
τῆς γραὸς ἐπιπολῆς ἔπεισιν αἱ χύτραι.

Χορός

οὐκ ἔτι τοίνυν εἰκὸς μέλλειν οὐδ᾽ ἡμᾶς, ἀλλ᾽ ἀναχωρεῖν
ἐς τοὔπισθεν: δεῖ γὰρ κατόπιν τούτων ᾄδοντας ἕπεσθαι.

The Biographies

The seats in the Theatre of Dionysus, Athens



A Victorian artist's impression of the theatre in its heyday

INTRODUCTION TO ARISTOPHANES by John Williams White

Aristophanes is an elusive poet. The main religious convictions of Aeschylus may be determined with certainty from his extant plays; attentive study of the dramas of Euripides reveals his cardinal opinions on politics, society and religion, and his philosophic attitude; but who can affirm with confidence that he has penetrated the comic mask of Aristophanes and knows his beliefs? The poet's mocking irony baffles and perplexes his reader at almost every turn.

One element of the poet's irony is his apparent frankness. He has at times the air of desiring to be taken seriously and seems to be expressing honest convictions. He is very suggestive and provokes reflection, but the attempt to reduce his opinions to system reveals the illusion. We become uneasily conscious that the great satirist is laughing behind his mask.

A proof of this deceptive quality of the poet's humour is found in the diversity of the opinions that have been held as to his purpose in writing. It was once the fashion among modern interpreters to take him very seriously, — the comic poet disappeared in the reformer. He was eulogized as a moralist and patriot, whose lofty purpose was to instruct his fellow-countrymen; as an earnest thinker, who had reflected deeply on the problems of society and government and had made Comedy simply the vehicle of his reforming ideas; as a wise and discerning counsellor, who was competent to advise the citizens of Athens at a critical time on political questions and whose judgement of men and measures was sound; as a stern man withal, resolute in the performance of duty, the implacable and victorious foe of all, wherever found, who undermined the glory of Athens. This view, which Grote combated *(History of Greece,* lxvii), finds vigorous expression in the *Apology* of Robert Browning:

"Next, whom thrash?
Only the coarse fool and the clownish knave?
Higher, more artificial, composite
Offence should prove my prowess, eye and arm!

Not who robs henroost, tells of untaxed figs, Spends all his substance on stewed ellops-fish, Or gives a pheasant to his neighbour's wife: No! strike malpractice that affects the State, The common weal — intriguer or poltroon, Venality, corruption, what care I

If shrewd or witless merely? — so the thing Lay sap to aught that made

Athenai bright And happy, change her customs, lead astray Youth or age, play the demagogue at Pnux, The sophist in Palaistra, or — what's worst, As widest mischief, — from the Theatre

Preach innovation, bring contempt on oaths, Adorn licentiousness, despise the Cult.

Thus vaunts the poet, as Browning interprets him, just after the great victory won at Arginusae. "Sparta is at our feet, a new day dawns, the War is at an end. For Athens has at length learnt the bitter lesson she might have been spared had she yielded to my pleas for peace." The actual history of the next twelve months is pathetic. The battle at Arginusae, in which Callicratidas fell, restored the maritime supremacy of Athens, but peace was not secured. The Spartans made overtures, but the Athenian people, paying small heed to the "good counsels" that their Poet had given them in the *Acharnians,* the *Peace,* the *Lysistrata,* and in other comedies no longer extant, followed the lead of drunken Cleophon and rejected the Spartan proposals, just as five years before they had committed the grave error of accepting his advice after the Athenian victory at Cyzicus. Sparta bestirred herself, Lysander was sent out, and within a year Athenian arms suffered irretrievable reverse at Aegospotami.

The poet's counsels of peace were rejected. Peace came only with disaster. His "sage" solutions of many other burning questions were equally ineffective. If Aristophanes was working for reform, as a long line of learned interpreters of the poet have maintained, the result was lamentably disappointing: he succeeded in effecting not a single change. He wings the shafts of his incomparable wit at all the popular leaders of the day — Cleon, Hyperbolus, Peisander, Cleophon, Agyrrhius, in succession, and is reluctant to unstring his bow even when they are dead. But he drove no one of them from power; there is little evidence, indeed, that he damaged their influence or even disturbed their brazen self-confidence. Cleon, when the poet's libellous personal abuse became even in his judgement indecent, promptly brought him to his knees.

"When Cleon pressed me hard and tanned my hide, and outsiders laughed to see the sport, I confess" — Aristophanes says in the *Wasps*— "I played the ape a bit." He adds significantly that he failed to get popular support in this quarrel. The inference is that the people did not think badly of Cleon; but modern opinion of the popular leaders in Athens, formed on the evidence that Aristophanes is supposed to furnish, has been persistently unfavourable, and Cleon's rehabilitation as a sagacious, if turbulent, statesman who consistently maintained the imperial policy of Pericles has been slow.

The poet vehemently protested, it has been said, against the New Education,

and viewing the whole intellectual tendency of his time with alarm, pleaded for a restoration of the simple discipline that had moulded the morals and minds and manners of the hardy men who fought at Marathon. Furthermore, he clearly apprehended the evils inherent in the Athenian system of judicature, which committed the administration of justice to a horde of common men, ignorant of the law, swayed by the impulse of the moment, "monsters of caprice and injustice," and ruthlessly exposed the unrighteousness of its proceedings. Finally, reverent of the best traditions of the stage, he stood forth, it is alleged, as their uncompromising defender, and sternly resisted the innovations that were gradually changing the spirit and the form of tragedy during the last third of the' century, and for a generation relentlessly pursued xii their chief exponent, concealing an attack that was meant to ruin him under the veil of caricature, parody, burlesque, and satire. But Socrates still frequented, winter and summer, the gymnasia, the market and the schools, and the Sophists continued to discourse and draw their pay; Philocleon, after a single experience of the pleasures of polite society, again forgathered with his cronies before the dawn of day and trudged away to Court; and Euripides, calmly disregarding the malicious strictures of his youthful critic, continued to write tragedy in his own manner and to present on the stage plays that were heard by the young men of Athens with wild acclaim.

This extreme conception of the function of Greek comedy as chiefly censorial and monitory has been modified with larger and more exact knowledge of the times in which the poet lived and of the conditions of life under which he wrote, but it has had unfortunate consequences. These plays have been regarded as a trustworthy source of information in establishing the facts of Greek history, biography, and institutions. So serious an interpretation of a form of literature of which the primary intention must always be entertainment and amusement inevitably obscured the poet's elusive humour. A jest became a statement of fact, a caricature a portrait, a satire a document. The poet's conception, clothed in a fantastical disguise that rivalled the grotesque dress of his own actors, has been essentially misapprehended in an entire play.

On the other hand the mistaken disposition, recently manifested, to regard Aristophanes simply as a jester and to deny that he had any other purpose than to provoke laughter is an extreme, though natural, reaction. This view denies at the same time, as might have been expected, the cathartic efficacy of Greek tragedy. The highest comedy, typed in the earlier plays of Aristophanes, and in some of the comedies of Molière, is regenerative, the purpose of Aristophanes in the *Acharnians,* in which the action turns upon the impossible and fantastic whimsy of an Athenian farmer securing peace with Sparta for himself and his family

alone, is to ridicule the war-party. Nobody would have been more amused than the poet if he had been told that his play was to stop the fighting, but he did believe that the War was an evil, and so far his heart was honestly in his theme; and I have no doubt that many a man who had laughed uproariously at the peace-loving farmer set single-handed in the comedy against a quarrelsome chorus, a powerful general, the whole tribe of sycophants, and the demagogue Cleon in the background, went home from the play less content with, the course of his political leaders and longing in his heart for the good old days of peace. The instrument by which the poet probed the popular discontent was that most effective of all means when skilfully used — a laugh.

To regard Aristophanes as merely a jester is to mistake the man. Ridicule of contemporary persons, that is generally good-natured, or systems or prevailing ideas is his main purpose, I think, in his plays. His praise is for the dead. This ridicule, which ranges from satire to airy conceit, is made humorous by centering it in a far-fetched fantastic conception that is not the less available if it is impossible. Facts are exaggerated or invented with superb nonchalance and bewildering semblance of reality. In these mad revels of unrestrained fancy is difficult to lay hands upon Aristophanes the man. Nevertheless we do discover probable indications of is attachments and beliefs. He lived in an age of intellectual unrest when many vital questions pressed or solution. That a man of his intelligence did not jive them consideration and reach conclusions is impossible. No doubt he detested a debauchee — let Ariphrades bear witness, — but he must have sympathized with the revolt of the young men of his day against the severe and meagre discipline in which youth were trained during the first half of the century, and must have shared in their eager interest in the new subjects of knowledge. No doubt he deprecated the vicious use of the skill for which Strepsiades clamours in the *Clouds,* but he had too keen a mind to fail to distinguish between the right and the wrong use of this power or to reject all study of the art of persuasion because it might be abused. He was himself a skilful dialectician, as the Debates found in nearly all his comedies prove. He was acquainted with Socrates and must have known that he never misused his wonderful dialectical power, and must have felt an expert's special thrill of pleasure in observing with what skill he employed it. Furthermore, the times in which the poet lived were troublous; the fate of Athens again and again stood on the razor's edge. He was not indifferent to the welfare of his country nor of his fellow-countrymen. There is a serious undertone in the *Acharnians* that gives it an indescribable elevation, and in the *Lysistrata,* a Rabelaisian play written after the disaster to Athenian arms in Sicily, in which, Thucydides records, fleet and army utterly perished, and of the many who went forth few returned home, there

are verses of intensest pathos that betray the poet's poignant sympathy:

οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνὴρ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ; μὰ Δί' οὐ δῆτ', εἰφ' ἕτερός τις.

Aristophanes, then, was a man of quick sympathies and settled convictions, although positive expression of belief and feeling is naturally rare in his plays, since he was a writer of comedy. Despite this reticence, it is both interesting and important to determine, so far as this may be done, his opinions on the questions that in his day were pressing for answer, and among these especially his political position. Was he an aristocrat? Was he, in particular, as M. Couat believed, a pamphleteer in the pay of the aristocrats? Or was he a democrat? And if a democrat, how is the satirical — but extremely comical — characterization of Athenian Demus in the *Knights,* which his countrymen viewed with good-natured amusement, to be interpreted? To these weighty and significant questions the reader may find an answer by studying the plays for himself.

JOHN WILLIAMS WHITE.

ARISTOPHANES by T. W. Lumb

At the end of the *Symposium* Plato represents Socrates as convincing both Agathon, a tragedian, and Aristophanes that the writer of tragedy will be able to write comedy also. That the two forms are not wholly divorced is clear from the history of ancient drama itself: Each dramatist competed with four plays, three tragedies and a Satyric drama. What this last is can be plainly seen in the *Cyclops* of Euripides, which relates in comic form the adventures of Odysseus and Silenus in the monster's company. Further, the tendency of tragedy was inevitably towards comedy. The extant work of Aeschylus and Sophocles is not without comic touches; but the trend is clearer in Euripides who was an innovator in this as in many other matters. Laughter and tears are neighbours; a happy ending is not tragic; loosely connected scenes are the essence of Old Comedy, and loosely written tragic dialogue (common in Euripides' later work) closely resembles the language of comedy, which is practically prose in verse form. The debt which later comedy owed to Euripides is great; reminiscences of him abound; he is quoted directly and indirectly; his stage tricks are adopted and his realistic characters are the very population of the Comic stage.

The logically developed plot is the characteristic of serious drama. Old Comedy, its antithesis, is often a succession of scenes in which the connection is loose without being impossible. In it the unexpected is common, for it is an escape from the conventions of ordinary life, a thing of causes and effects. It might be more accurate to say that farce is a better description of the work which is associated with the name of Aristophanes.

This writer was born about 448, was a member of the best Athenian society of the day, quickly took the first place as the writer of comedy and died about 385. He saw the whole of the Peloponnesian war and has given us a most vivid account of the passions it aroused and its effect on Athenian life. He first won the prize in 425, when he produced the *Acharnians* under an assumed name. Pericles had died in 429; the horrors of war were beginning to make themselves felt; the Spartans were invading Attica, cutting down the fruit-trees and compelling the country folk to stream into the city. One of these, Dicaeopolis enters the stage. It is early morning; he is surprised that there is no popular meeting on the appointed day. He loathes the town and longs for his village; he had intended to heckle the speakers if they discussed anything but peace. Ambassadors from foreign nations are announced; seeing them he conceives the

daring project of making a separate peace with the Spartan for eight drachmae. His servant returns with three peaces of five, ten and thirty years; he chooses the last.

A chorus of angry Acharnians rush in to catch the traitor; they are charcoal burners ruined by the invasion. Dicaeopolis seizes a charcoal basket, threatening to destroy it if they touch him. Anxious to spare their townsman, the basket, they consent to hear his defence, which he offers to make with his neck on an executioner's block. He is afraid of the noisy patriotism appealed to by mob-orators and of the lust for condemning the accused which is the weakness of older men. Choosing from Euripides' wardrobe the rags in which Telephus was arrayed to rouse the audience to pity, he boldly ventures to plead the cause of the Spartans, though he hates them for destroying his trees. He asserts that "Olympian Pericles who thundered and lightened and confounded Greece" caused the war by putting an embargo on the food of their neighbour Megara, his pretext being a mere private quarrel.

The Chorus are divided; his opponents send for Lamachus, the swashbuckling general; the latter is discomfited and Dicaeopolis immediately opens a market with the Peloponnesians, Megarians and Boeotians, but not with Lamachus. In an important choral ode the poet justifies his existence. By his criticism he puts a stop to the foreign embassies which dupe the Athenians; he checks flattery and folly; he never bribes nor hoodwinks them, but exposes their harsh treatment of their subjects and their love of condemning on groundless charges the older generation which had fought at Marathon.

The play ends with a trading scene; a Boeotian in exchange for Copaic eels takes an Athenian informer, an article unknown in Boeotia. Lamachus returns wounded while Dicaeopolis departs in happy contrast to celebrate a feast of rustic jollity.

Aristophanes' chief butts were Cleon, Socrates and Euripides; the last is treated with good nature in this play. To modern readers the comedy is important for two reasons; first, it attacks the strange belief that a democracy must necessarily love peace; Aristophanes found it as full of the lust for battle as any other form of government; all it needed was a Lamachus to rattle a sword. Again, the unfailing source of war is plainly indicated, trade rivalry. War will continue as long as there are markets to capture and rivals to exclude from them.

In the next year, 424, Aristophanes produced the *Knights*, the most violent political lampoon in literature. The victim was Cleon who had succeeded Pericles as popular leader. He was at the height of his glory, having captured the Spartan contingent at Pylos, prisoners who were of great importance for diplomatic purposes. The comedy is a scathing criticism of democracy; the

subject is so controversial that it will be best to give some extracts without comment.

Two servants of Demos (the People) steal the oracles of the Paphlagonian (the babbler, Cleon) while he is asleep. To their joy they find that he will govern Demos' house only until a more abominable than he shall appear, namely a sausage-seller. That person immediately presenting himself is informed of his high calling. At first he is amazed. "I know nothing of refinement except letters, and them, bad as they are, badly." The answer is:

> "Your only fault is that you know them badly; mob-leadership has nothing to do with a man refined or of good character, rather with an ignoramus and a vile fellow."
>
> To his objection that he cannot look after a democracy the reply is,
>
> "it is easy enough; only go on doing what you are doing now. Mix and chop up everything; always bring the mob over by sweetening it with a few cook-shop terms. You have all the other qualifications, a nasty voice, a low origin, familiarity with the street."

The Paphlagonian Cleon runs in bawling that they are conspiring against the democracy. They call loudly for the Knights, who enter as the Chorus to assist them against Cleon, encouraging the sausage-seller to show the brazen effrontery which is the mob-orator's sole protection, and to prove that a decent upbringing is meaningless. Nothing loth, he redoubles Cleon's vulgarity on his head. Cleon rushes out intending to inform the Upper House of their treasons; the sausage-seller hurries after him, his neck being well oiled with his own lard to make Cleon's slanders slip off. A splendid ode is sung in the meantime; it contains a half-comic account of Aristophanes' training in his art and a panegyric on the old spirit which made Athens great. The sausage-seller returns to tell of Cleon's utter defeat; he is quickly followed by Cleon, who appeals to Demos himself, pointing out his own services.

> "At the first, when I was a member of the Council, I got in vast sums for the Treasury, partly by torture, partly by throttling, partly by begging. I never studied any private person's interest if I could only curry favour with you, to make you master of all Greece."

The sausage-seller refutes him.

> "Your object was to steal and take bribes from the cities, to blind Demos to your villainies by the dust of war, and to make him gape

> after you in need and necessity for war-pensions. If Demos can only get into the country in peace and taste the barley-cakes again, he will soon find out of what blessings you have rid him by your briberies; he will come back as a dour farmer and will hunt up a vote which will condemn you."

Cleon, the new Themistocles, is deposed from his stewardship.

He appeals to some oracles of Bacis, but the sausage-seller has better ones of Bacis' elder brother Glanis. The Chorus rebuke Demos, whom all men fear as absolute, for being easily led, for listening to the newest comer and for a perpetual banishment of his intelligence. In a second contest for Demos' favours Cleon is finally beaten when it appears that he has kept some dainties in his box while the sausage-seller has given his all. An appeal to an oracle prophesying his supplanter — one who can steal, commit perjury and face it out — so clearly applies to the sausage-seller that Cleon retires.

After a brief absence Demos appears with his new friend — but it is a different Demos, rid of his false evidence and jury system, the Demos of fifty years before. He is ashamed of his recent history, of his preferring doles to battleships. He promises a speedy reform, full pay to his sailors, strict revision of the army service rolls, an embargo on Bills of Parliament. To his joy he recovers the Thirty Years' peace which Cleon had hidden away, and realises at last his longing to escape from the city into the country.

This violent attack on Cleon was vigorously met; Aristophanes was prosecuted and seems to have made a compromise. In his next comedy, the *Clouds* (which was presented in 423) he changes his victim. Strepsiades, an old Athenian, married a high-born wife of expensive tastes; their son Pheidippides developed a liking for horses and soon brought his father to the edge of ruin. The latter requests the son to save him by joining the academy conducted by Socrates, where he can learn the worse argument which enables its possessor to win his case. Aided by it he can rid his father of debt. As the son flatly refuses, the old man decides to learn it himself. Entering the school he sees maps and drawings of all kinds and finally descries Socrates himself, far above his head in a basket, high among the clouds, studying the sun. Strepsiades begs him to teach him the Worse Argument at his own price. After initiating him, Socrates summons his deities the Clouds, who enter as the Chorus. These are the guardian deities of modern professors, seers, doctors, lazy long-haired long-nailed fellows, musicians who cultivate trills and tremolos, transcendental quacks who sing their praises. The old gods are dethroned, a vortex governing the universe. The Chorus tells Socrates to take the old man and teach him everything.

The ode which follows contains the poet's claim to be original.

> "I never seek to dupe you by hashing up the same old theme two or three times, but show my cleverness by introducing ever-new ideas, none alike and all smart."

Socrates returns with Strepsiades, whom he can teach nothing. The Chorus suggest he should bring his son to learn from Socrates how to get rid of debts. At first Pheidippides refuses but finally agrees, though he warns his father that he will rue his act. The Just and Unjust arguments come out of the academy to plead before the Chorus. The former draws a picture of the old-fashioned times when a sturdy race of men was reared on discipline, obedience and morality — a broad-chested vigorous type. In utter contempt the latter brands such teaching as prehistoric. Pleasure, self-indulgence, a lax code of morality and easy tolerance of little weaknesses are the ideal. The power of his words is such that the Just Argument deserts to him.

Strepsiades, coached by his son, easily circumvents two money-lenders and retires to his house. He is soon chased out by his son, who when asked to sing the old songs of Simonides and Aeschylus scorned the idea, humming instead an immoral modern tune of Euripides' making. A quarrel inevitably followed; Strepsiades was beaten by his son who easily proved that he had a right to beat his mother also. Stung to the quick the old man burns the academy; when Socrates and his pupils protest, he tells them they have but a just reward for their godlessness.

The Socrates here pilloried is certainly not the Socrates of history; his teaching was not immoral. But Aristophanes is drawing attention to the evil effects produced by the Sophists, who to the ordinary man certainly included Socrates. The importance of this play to us is clear. We are a nation of half-trained intelligences. Our national schools are frankly irreligious, our teachers people of weak credentials. Parental discipline is openly flouted, pleasure is our modern cult. Jazz bands, long-haired novelists and poets, misty philosophers, anti-national instructors are the idols of many a pale-faced and stunted son of Britain. The reverence which made us great is decadent and openly scoffed at. What is the remedy? Aristophanes burnt out the pestilent teachers. We had better not copy him till we are satisfied that the demand for them has ceased. A nation gets the instruction for which it is morally fitted. There is but one hope; we must follow the genuine Socratic method, which consisted of quiet individual instruction. Only thus will we slowly and patiently seize this modern spirit of unrest; our object should be not to suppress it — it is too sturdy, but to direct its

energies to a better and a more noble end.

Finding that the *Clouds* had been too wholesome to be popular, Aristophanes in 422 returned to attack Cleon in the *Wasps*. Early in the morning Bdelycleon (Cleon-hater) with his two servants is preventing his father Philocleon from leaving the house to go to the jury-courts. The old man's amusing attempts to evade their vigilance are frustrated, whereupon he calls for assistance. Very slowly a body of old men dressed as wasps, led by boys carrying lanterns, finds its way to the house to act as Chorus. They make many suggestions to the father to escape; just as he is gnawing through the net over him his son rushes in. The wasps threaten him with their formidable stings. After a furious conflict truce is declared. Bdelycleon complains of the inveterate juryman's habit of accusing everybody who opposes them of aiming at establishing a tyranny. Father and son consent to state their case for the Chorus to decide between them.

Philocleon glories in the absolute power he exercises over all classes; his rule is equal to that of a king. To him the greatest men in Athens bow as suppliants, begging acquittal. Some of these appeal to pity, others tell him Aesop's fables, others try to make him laugh. Most of all, he controls foreign policy through his privilege of trying statesmen who fail. In return for his duties he receives his pay, goes home and is petted by his wife and family. Bdelycleon opens thus:

> "it is a hard task, calling for a clever wit and more than comic genius to cure an ancient disease that has been breeding in the city."

After giving a rough estimate of the total revenue of Athens, he subtracts from it the miserable sum of three obols which the jurymen receive as pay. Where does the remainder go? It is evident that the jurymen are the mere catspaw of the big unscrupulous politicians who get all the profit and incur none of the odium. This argument convinces both the Chorus and Philocleon, old heroes of Marathon who created the Empire.

The latter asks what he is to do. His son promises to look after him, allowing him to gratify at home his itch for trying disputes. Two dogs are brought in; by a trick the son makes his father acquit instead of condemn. He then dresses him up decently and instructs him in the etiquette of a dinner-party, whither they proceed. But the old man behaves himself disgracefully, beating everyone in his cups. He appears with a flute-girl and is summoned for assault by a vegetable-woman, whose goods he has spoiled, and by a professional accuser. His insolence to his victims is checked by his son who thrusts him into the house before more accusers can appear.

It is sometimes believed that democracy is a less corrupt form of polity than any other. Aristophanes in this play exposes one of its greatest weaknesses.

Flattered by the sense of power which the possession of the vote brings with it, the enfranchised classes cannot always see that they easily become the tools of the clever rogues who get themselves elected to office by playing on the fears of the electors. The Athenian voter was as easily scared by the word "tyranny" as the modern elector is by "capital". The result is the same. Not only do the so-called lower orders sink into an ignorant slavery; they use their power so brainlessly and so mercilessly that they are a perfect bugbear to the rest.

Literary men's prophecies rarely come true. In 421 the *Peace*, produced in March, was followed almost immediately by a compact between Athens and Sparta for fifty years. An old farmer, Trygaeus, sails up to heaven on the back of a huge beetle, bidding his family farewell for three days. He meets Hermes, who tells him that Zeus in disgust has surrendered men to the war they love. War himself has hidden Peace in a deep pit, and has made a great mortar in which he intends to grind civilisation to powder. He looks for the Athenian pestle, Cleon, but cannot find him — the Spartan pestle Brasidas has also been mislaid; both were lost in Thrace. Before he can find another pestle Trygaeus summons all men to pull Peace out of her prison. Hermes at first objects, but is won over by offers of presents. At length the goddess is discovered with her two handmaids, Harvest and Mayfair.

A change immediately comes over the faces of men. In pure joy they laugh through their bruises. Hermes explains to the farmers who form the Chorus why Peace left the earth. It was the trade rivalry which first drove her away; at Athens the subject cities fomented strife with Sparta, then the country population flocked to the city, where they fell easy victims to the public war-mongers, who found it profitable to continue the struggle. The god then offers to Trygaeus Harvest as a bride to make his vineyards fruitful. In the ode which follows the poet claims that he first made comedy dignified

> "with great thoughts and words and refined jests, not lampooning
> individuals but attacking the Tanner war-god."

Returning to earth Trygaeus sends Harvest to the Council, while the marriage sacrifice is made ready. A soothsayer endeavours to impose on the rustics with prophecies that the Peace will be a failure. Trygaeus refutes him with a quotation from Homer. "Without kin or law or home is a man who loveth harsh strife between peoples." The makers of agricultural implements quickly sell all their stock, while the makers of helmets, crests and breastplates find their market

gone. A glad wedding song forms the epilogue.

Aristophanes believed that the war meant an extinction of civilisation and loathed it because it was useless. What would he have thought of the barbarous and bloodthirsty Great War of our own day? The causes which produced both struggles were identical — trade rivalry and a set of jingoes who found that war paid. But he was mistaken in believing that peace was the normal condition of Greek life. He was born just before the great period began during which Pericles gave Greece a long respite from quarrels, and seems to have been quite nonplussed by what to him was an abnormal upheaval. His bright hopes soon faded and he seems to have given up thinking about peace or war during a period of eight years. In the meanwhile Athens had attacked Sicily; perhaps a change had come over comedy itself owing to legal action. At any rate, the old and virulent type of political abuse was becoming a thing of the past; the next play, the *Birds*, produced in 414, abandons Athens altogether for a new and charming world in which there was a rest from strife.

Two Athenians, Peithetairus (Persuasive) and Euelpides (Sanguine) reach the home of the Hoopoe bird, once a mortal, to find a happier place than their native city. Suddenly, as the bird describes the happy careless life of his kind, Peithetairus conceives the idea of founding a new bird city between earth and heaven. The Hoopoe summons his friends to hear their opinion; as they come in he names them to the wondering Athenians. At first the Birds threaten to attack the mortals, their natural enemies. They listen, however, to Peithetairus' words of wisdom.

> "Nay, wise men learn much from their foes, for good counsel saves everything. We cannot learn from a friend, but an enemy quickly forces the truth upon us. For example, cities learn from their enemies, not their friends, to create high walls and battleships, and such are the salvation of children, home and substance."

A truce is made. Peithetairus tells them the Birds once ruled the world but have been deposed, becoming the prey of those who once worshipped them. They should ring round the air, like Babylon, with mighty baked bricks and send an ultimatum to the gods, demanding their lost kingdom and forbidding a passage to earth; another messenger should descend to men to require from them due sacrifices. The Birds agree; the two companions retire to Hoopoe's house to eat the magic root which will turn them into winged things. After a choral panegyric on the bird species Peithetairus returns to name the new city Cloudcuckootown, whose erection is taken in hand. Impostors make their

appearance, a priest to sacrifice, a poet to eulogise, an oracle-dealer to promise success, a mathematician to plan out the buildings, an overseer and a seller of decrees to enact by-laws; all are summarily ejected by Peithetairus.

News comes that the city is already completed. Suddenly Iris darts in, on her way to earth to demand the accustomed sacrifices from men which the new city has interrupted; she is sent back to heaven to warn the gods of their coming overthrow. A herald from earth brings tidings that more than a myriad human beings are on their way to settle in the city. A parent-beater first appears, then a poet, then an informer — all being firmly dealt with. Prometheus slips in under a parasol, to advise Peithetairus to demand from Zeus his sceptre and with it the lady Royalty as his bride. Poseidon, Heracles and an outlandish Triballian god after a long discussion make terms with the new monarch, who goes with them to fetch his bride. A triumphant wedding forms the conclusion.

The purpose of this comedy has been the subject of much discussion. As a piece of literature it is exquisite. It lifts us out of a world of hard unpleasant fact into a region where life is a care-free thing, bores or impostors are banished and the reign of the usurper ends. The play is not of or for any one particular period; it is really timeless, appealing to the ineradicable desire we all have for an existence of joy and light, where dreams always come true and hope ends only in fulfilment. It is therefore one of man's deathless achievements; the power of its appeal is evident from the frequency with which it has been revived — it was staged at Cambridge this very year. Staged it will be as long as men are what they are.

Having learned that men are a naturally combative race, lusting for blood, the poet saw it was hopeless to bring them to terms. Nor could he for ever live in Cloudcuckootowns; he therefore bethought him of another expedient for obtaining peace. In 411 he imagines the women of Athens, Peloponnese and Boeotia combining to force terms on the men by deserting their homes, under the leadership of *Lysistrata*. She calls a council of war, explaining her plot to capture the Acropolis. A Chorus of men rush in to smoke them out, armed with firebrands, but are met by a Chorus of women bearing pitchers to quench the flames. An officer of the Council comes to argue with Lysistrata, who points out that in the first part of the war (down to 421) the women had kept quiet, though aware of men's incompetence; now they have determined to control matters. They are possessed of the Treasury, their experience of household economy gives them a good claim to organise State finance; they grow old in the absence of their husbands; a man can marry a girl however old he is. A woman's prime soon comes; if she misses it, she sits at home looking for omens of a husband; women make the most valuable of all contributions to the State, namely sons.

The officer retires to report to the Council.

Lysistrata, seeing a weakness in the women's resolution, encourages them with an oracle which promises victory if they will only persist. A herald speedily arrives from Sparta announcing a similar defection in that city. Ambassadors of both sides are brought to Lysistrata who makes a splendid speech.

> "I am a woman, but wit is in me and I have no small conceit of myself. Having heard many speeches from my father and elder men I am not ill-informed. Now that I have caught you I will administer to you the rebuke you richly deserve. You sprinkle altars from the same lustral-bowl, like relatives, at Olympia, Pylae, Delphi and many other places. Though the barbarian enemy is on you in armed force, you destroy Greek men and cities."

She points out that both sides have been guilty of injustice; both should make surrenders and agree to a peace which is duly ratified. The Chorus of men believe that Athenian ambassadors should go to Sparta in their cups: —

> "As it is, whenever we go there sober, we immediately see what mischief we can make. We never hear what they say; what they do not say we conjecture and never bring back the same tale about the same facts."

Odes of thanksgiving wind up the piece.

Exactly twenty years earlier Euripides in the *Medea* had written the first protest against women's subjection to an unfair social lot. By a strange irony of fortune his most severe critic Aristophanes was the first man in Europe to give utterance to their claim to a political equality. True, he does so in a comedy, but he was speaking perhaps more seriously than he would have us think. Women do contribute sons to the State; they do believe that they are as capable as men of judging political questions — with justice, in a system where no qualifications but twilight opinions are necessary. On this ground they have won the franchise. Nor has the feminist movement really begun as yet. We may see women in control of our political Acropolis, forcing the world to make peace to save our chances of becoming ultimately civilised.

The *Thesmophoriazousae*, staged in 411, is a lampoon on Euripides. That poet with his kinsman Mnesilochus calls at the house of Agathon, a brother tragedian whose style is amusingly parodied. Euripides informs him that the women intend to hold a meeting to destroy him for libel; they are celebrating the

feast of the Thesmophoria. As Agathon refuses an invitation to go disguised and defend Euripides, Mnesilochus undertakes the dangerous duty; his disguise is effected on the stage with comic gusto. At the meeting the case against the poet is first stated; he has not only lampooned women, he has taught their husbands how to counter their knaveries and is an atheist. Mnesilochus defends him; women are capable of far more villainies than even Euripides has exposed. The statement of these raises the suspicions of the ladies who soon unmask the intruder, inquiring of him the secret ritual of the Thesmophoria.

One of them goes to the Town Council to find out what punishment they are to inflict.

Mnesilochus meanwhile snatches a child from the arms of one of them, holding it as a hostage. To his amazement it turns out to be a wine-stoup. He vainly tries some of the dodges practised in Euripides' plays to bring him to the rescue. The Chorus meantime expose the folly of calling women evil.

> "If we are a bane, why do you marry us? Why do you forbid us to walk abroad or to be caught peeping out? Why use such pains to preserve this evil thing? If we do peep out, everybody wants this bane to be seen; if we draw back in modesty, every man is much more anxious to see this pest peep out again. At any rate, no woman comes into the city after stealing public money fifty talents at a time."

A better plan would be

> "to give the mothers of famous sons the right of place in festivals; those whose sons are evil should take a lower place."

In an amusing series of scenes Euripides enters dressed up as some of his own characters to save Mnesilochus. A borough officer enters with a policeman whom he orders to bind the prisoner and guard him. More disguises are adopted by Euripides who succeeds at last in freeing his kinsman by pretending to be an old woman with a marriageable daughter whom the policeman can have at a price. When the latter goes to fetch the money Euripides and his relative disappear.

The poet has in this play very skilfully palmed off on Euripides his own attack on women. We have already seen what Euripides' attitude was to the neglected sex. Feminine deceit has been a stock theme in all ages; it had already been treated in Greek literature and was to be passed through Roman literature to

the Middle Ages, in which period it received more than its due share of attention. In itself it is a poor theme, good enough perhaps as a stand-by, for it is sure to be popular. Those who pose as woman-haters might consider the words of the Chorus in this play.

The most violent attack on Euripides was delivered after his death by Aristophanes in the *Frogs*, written in 405. This famous comedy is so well-known that a brief outline will suffice. It falls into two parts. The first describes the adventures of Dionysus who with his servant Xanthias descends to the lower world to bring back Euripides. The god and his servant exchange parts according as the persons they meet are friendly or hostile. In the second part the three great tragedians are brought on the scene. Euripides, who has just died, tries to claim sovereignty in Hades; Sophocles, "gentle on earth and gentle in death" withdraws his claim, leaving Aeschylus to the contest. The two rivals appoint Dionysus, the patron of drama, to act as umpire. In a series of admirable criticisms the weaknesses of both are plainly indicated. Finally Dionysus decides to take back Aeschylus.

This play is as popular as the Birds. It contains one or two touches of low comedy, but these are redeemed by the spirit of inexhaustible jollity which sets the whole thing rocking with life and gaiety. It is an original in Greek literature, being the first piece of definitely literary criticism. A long experience had made the sense of the stage a second nature to Aristophanes who here criticises two rival schools of poetry as a dramatist possessed of inside professional knowledge. So far his work is of the same class as Cicero's *De Oratore* and Reynolds' *Discourses*. His object, however, was not to preserve a balance of impartiality but to condemn Euripides as a traitor to the whole tradition of Attic tragedy. He does so, but not without giving his reasons — and these are good and true. No person is qualified to judge the development of Greek tragedy who has not weighed long and carefully the second portion of the *Frogs*.

In 393 Aristophanes broke entirely new ground in the *Ecclesiazousae* (women in Parliament), a discussion of social and economic problems. Praxagora assembles the women of Athens to gain control of the city. They meet early in the morning, disguise themselves with beards and open the question.

> "The decisions of men in Parliament are to reflecting people like
> the derangements of drunken men. I am disgusted with our policy,
> we always employ unscrupulous leaders. If one of them is honest
> for one day, he is a villain for ten. Doling out public money, men
> have eyes only for what they can make out of the State. Let women

> govern; they are the best at providing money and are not likely to be deceived in office, for they are well versed in trickery."

They proceed to the Assembly to execute their plot.

On the opening of the discussion one Euaeon proposed a scheme of wholesale spoliation of the property owners to support the poor. Then a white-faced citizen arose and proposed flatly that women should rule, that being the one thing which had never yet been tried. The motion was carried with great enthusiasm, the men declaring that "an old proverb says all our senseless and foolish decisions turn out for good". When Praxagora returns to the stage, she declares she intends to introduce a system of absolute communism. All citizens are to live and dine in common and possess wives in common, existing on the work of slaves. Any person who refuses to declare his wealth is to be punished by losing his rations, "the punishment of a man through his belly being the worst insult he can suffer". A vivid description of the workings of the new system ends the play.

Aristophanes is no doubt criticising Plato's *Republic*, but allowing for altered circumstances we cannot go far wrong if we see here a picture of the suggested remedy for the social distress which is inseparable from a great war. At Athens, beaten and impoverished, there must have been widespread discontent; the foundation upon which society was built must have been criticised, its inequalities being emphasised by idealists and intriguers alike. Our own generation has to face a similar situation. We have seen women in Parliament and we are deluged by a flood of communistic idealism emanating from Russia. Its one commendation is that it has never yet been tried among us and many simple folk will applaud the philosophy which persuades itself that all our mistakes will somehow come right in the end. The problem of finding somebody to do the work was easily solved in ancient Athens where the slaves were three times as numerous as the free. England, possessing no slaves, would under communism be unable to feed herself and would die of starvation.

The *Plutus*, written in 388 is a singular work. An honest old man Chremylus enters with Carion "his most faithful and most thievish servant". They are holding fast a blind old man, in obedience to an oracle of Apollo. After a little questioning the stranger admits that he is Plutus, the god of wealth. Wild with joy they invite him to their house. He does not like houses, for they have never brought him to any good.

> "If I enter a stingy man's abode, he immediately digs me deep in the earth and denies he has ever seen me. If I enter a crazy man's home, given to dicing and fast living, I am soon ejected

naked."

Learning that Chremylus is honest and poor he consents to try once again.

The rumour gets abroad that Chremylus has suddenly grown rich; his acquaintance reveal their true characters as they come to question him about his luck. The goddess Poverty enters, to be cross-examined by Chremylus who has suggested that Plutus should recover his sight under the healing care of Asclepius. Before the care is effected, she points out the dangers of his project. He is well-meaning, but foolish; Poverty is not Mendicancy, it means a life of thrift, with nothing left over but with no real want; it is the source of the existence of all the handicrafts, nor can the slaves be counted on to do the work if everybody becomes rich, for nobody will sell slaves if he has money already. Riches on the other hand are the curse of many; wealth rots men, causing gout, dropsy and bloated insolence; the gods themselves are poor, otherwise they would not need human sacrifice.

The cure is successful; Plutus recovers his eyes and can see to whom he gives his blessings; the good and the rascals alike receive their due reward. The change which wealth produces in men's natures is most admirably depicted in the Epilogue.

This is an Allegory dramatised with no little skill. The piece is full of the shrewdest hits at our human failings, aimed, however, with no ill-nature. Aristophanes' power of characterisation here shows no falling-off. Fortune's fickleness is proverbial and has received frequent literary treatment. Men's first prayer is for wealth; poverty, according to Dr. Johnson, is evidently a great evil because it needs such a long defence. Yet it is only the well-meaning but utterly unpractical idealists who desire to make us all prosperous —

"How that may change our nature, that's the question."

Some are not fit for riches, being ignorant of their true function; self-indulgence and moral rottenness follow wealth; because of the abuse of the power which wealth brings, we are taught that it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.

It is difficult to convey an adequate impression of Aristophanes to the English reader. Long excerpts are impossible and undesirable. Comedy is essentially a mirror of contemporary life; it contains all kinds of references to passing political events and transient forms of social life; its turns of language are peculiar to its own age. We who are familiar with Shakespeare know that one of our chief difficulties in reading him is the constant reference to what was obvious to the Elizabethan public but is dark to us. Yet the plays of Aristophanes in an English translation such as that of Frere read far more like modern work

than the comedies of Ben Jonson, for the society in which Aristophanes moved was far more akin to ours. It was democratic, was superficially educated, was troubled by socialistic and communistic unrest exactly as we are. Some of our modern thinkers would be surprised to find how many of their dreamings were discussed twenty-three centuries ago by men quite as intelligent and certainly as honest.

Aristophanes' greatest fault is excessive conservatism. He gives us a most vivid description of the evils and abuses of his own time, yet has no remedy except that of putting back the hands of the clock some fifty years. Marathon, Aeschylus, the nascent democracy were his ideal and he was evidently put out by the ending of the period of "Periclean calm." He then has no solution for the problems in front of him. But it might be asked whether a dramatist's business is not rather to leave solutions to the thinker, concerning himself only with mirroring men's natures. With singular courage and at no small personal risk this man attacked the great ones of his day, scourging their hypocrisies and exposing the real tendencies of their principles. If he has opened our eyes to the objections to popular government and popular poetry and has made us aware of the significance of the feminist movement, let us be thankful; we shall be more on our guard and be less easily persuaded that problems are new or that they are capable of a final solution.

On the other hand, we shall find in him qualities of a most original type. His spirits are inexhaustible, he laughs heartily and often without malice at the follies of the mass of men; Cleon and Euripides were anathema to him, but the rest he treats as Fluellen did Pistol: "You beggarly knave, God bless you". His lyrics must be classed with the best in Greek poetry. Like Rabelais this rollicking jolly spirit disguises his wisdom under the mask of folly, turning aside with some whimsical twist just when he is beginning to be too serious. He will repay the most careful reading, for his best things are constantly turning up when least expected. His political satire ceasing with the death of Cleon, he turned to the land of pure fancy among the winged careless things; he then raised the woman's question, started literary criticism and ended with Allegory. To few has such a noble cycle of work been vouchsafed; we owe him at least a debt of remembrance, for he loved us as our brother.

Athens — believed to be where Aristophanes died